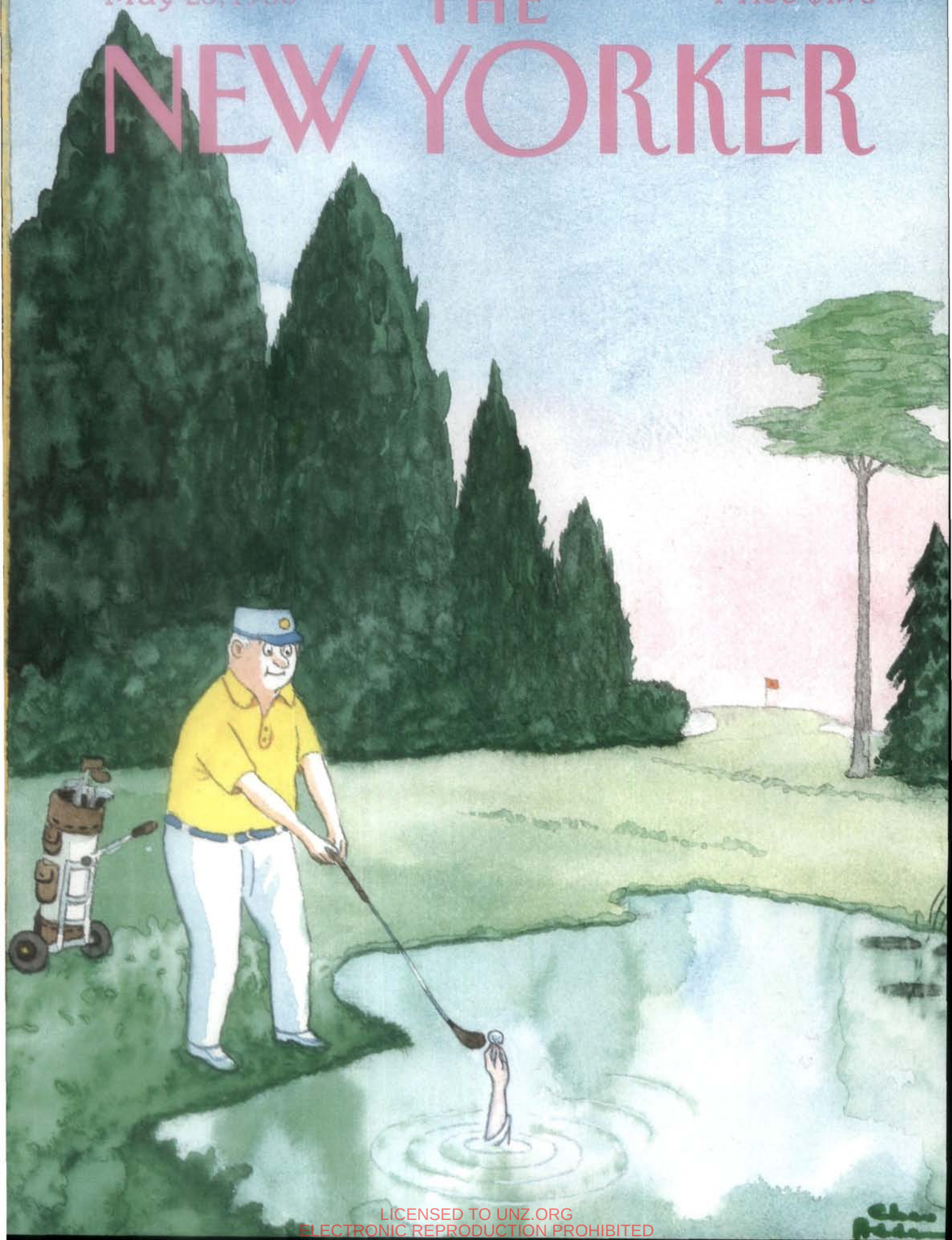


May 23, 1988

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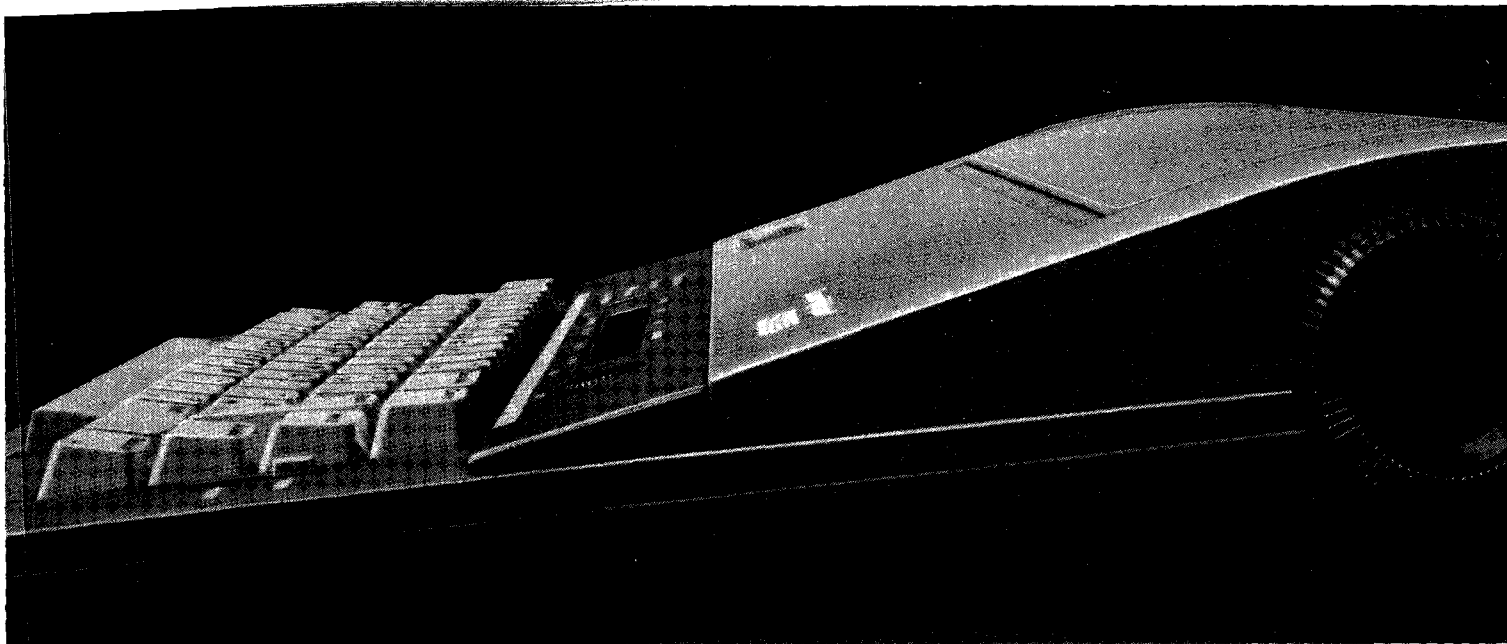
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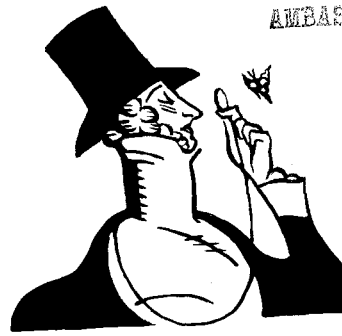
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TABLE OF CONTENTS
MAY 23, 1988

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN	4
THE TALK OF THE TOWN	19
"WHEN HE REEMERGES"	Randy Cohen 25
"THE JOURNEY TO THE DEAD"	John Updike 26
"THE WARS IN NEW JERSEY" (POEM)	W. S. Merwin 28
"THE CLOVER CROSS" (POEM)	Mary Kinzie 32
PROFILES (PEGGY RAMSAY)	Mel Gussow 35
A REPORTER AT LARGE (NUCLEAR WASTE)	Fred C. Shapiro 61
THE ART WORLD	Adam Gopnik 68
LETTER FROM WASHINGTON	Elizabeth Drew 72
THE THEATRE	Mimi Kramer 85
BOOKS	Clive James 86
COVER:	Charles Addams
DRAWINGS:	George Price, Ed Fisher, William Hamilton, Roz Chast, J. B. Handelsman, Tom Cheney, Robert Weber, Lee Lorenz, Stan Hunt, Donald Reilly, Henry Martin, Edward Collet, Gahan Wilson, Mike Twohy, Jack Ziegler, Charles Barsotti, William Steig, Richard Cline, Stuart Leeds

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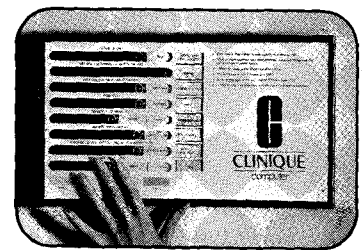
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

PLAYS AND MUSICALS

ANYTHING GOES—Under the clever direction of Jerry Zaks, this exuberant revival is primarily a celebration of Cole Porter himself. The libretto, as revised from the original by Timothy Crouse and John Weidman, is consistently entertaining. The company, which includes Bill McCutcheon, Howard McGillin, Patti LuPone, Anthony Heald, and Kathleen Mahony-Bennett, does more than justice to the words and score. (Reviewed in our issue of 11/2/87.) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY—This revival of Harold Pinter's first full-length play, directed by Carey Perloff, will be of interest to anyone eager to see a difficult playwright's work correctly done. The play may seem empty and a little inept now, but this production, with a company led by the wonderful David Strathairn, is cast almost as perfectly as it is visually conceived (and only an American matchbook is out of place on Loy Arcenas's clever set). (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Tuesday through Saturday at 8. Matinées Saturday and Sunday at 2. Closes Sunday, May 22.)

BOYS' LIFE—Directed by W. H. Macy, Howard Korder's engrossing new play is an eminently quotable postmodern comedy of manners that makes an intelligent contribution to the dialogue on the battle between the sexes. (3/28/88) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 3. Closes Sunday, May 29.)

BURN THIS—A play by Lanford Wilson, with Eric Roberts as a foulmouthed restaurant owner who woos and wins his dead brother's dancing partner. The supporting cast includes Jonathan Hogan and Lou Liberatore. Marshall W. Mason was the director, and the distinguished setting was designed by John Lee Beatty and lighted by Dennis Parichy. (10/26/87) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

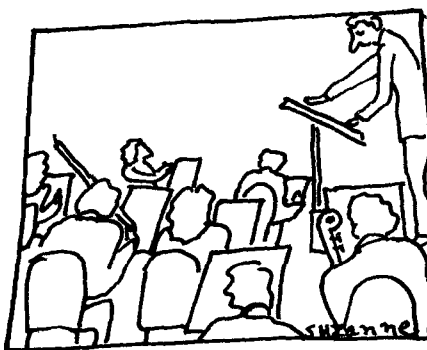
CABARET—This tasteful revival of the 1966 musical by John Kander and Fred Ebb (directed by Harold Prince) has a gloriously muted Joel Grey re-creating his role as the Emcee and a sterling performance by Alyson Reed, who plays Sally Bowles as she was always meant to be played. (11/2/87) (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 869-0550. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3. Closes Saturday, June 4.)

CARRIE—The first splatter musical. This pseudo-operatic adaptation of Stephen King's pot-boiler, directed by Terry Hands, has vulgar choreography by Debbie Allen and a cast of untalented, unprepossessing performers. It is probably the worst show in town—in spite of a star turn by the indomitable Betty Buckley. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 977-9370. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

CHESS—This noisy rock musical is a British import about an international chess match between a bad-tempered American and a more equable Russian, who falls in love with the American's beautiful second. There is a lot of plot, but through the hyperactivity and the electronic blare there is also life on the stage. Judy Kuhn, David Carroll, and Philip Casnoff give splendid performances in the leading roles. Trevor Nunn directed the American company. (5/9/88) (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

EQUITY LIBRARY THEATRE—Vincent Youmans' 1925 musical **NO, NO, NANETTE** is the final production of the season. (Equity Library Theatre, 103rd St. and Riverside Dr. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 2:30. Closes Sunday, June 5. For information about tickets, for which contributions are requested, call 663-2028.)

FRANKIE AND JOHNNY IN THE CLAIR DE LUNE—Ter-



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rence McNally's enchanting comedy about sex and the sudden onset of love in an apartment on Tenth Avenue in the Fifties. Kathy Bates and Kenneth Welsh are remarkable, under the direction of Paul Benedict. Starting Tuesday, May 24, Carol Kane and Bruce Weitz will take over the leads. (11/9/87) (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

THE GRANDMA PLAYS—A comedy by Todd Graff. (Vineyard Theatre, 309 E. 26th St. 683-0696. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3. Closes Sunday, May 29.)

INTO THE WOODS—The new musical by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine is an attempt to show what lurks beneath the surface of conventional fairy tales. The amusing first half is like a musical staging of Bruno Bettelheim's "The Uses of Enchantment." The rather nasty second half degenerates into cheap philosophy. The costumes (by Ann Houli-Ward) and sets (by Tony Straiges) are pretty to look at, and the songs are beautiful or funny—sometimes both. The cast, which includes Phylicia Rashad and Joanna Gleason, is directed by Mr. Lapine. (11/16/87) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-6363. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

JOE TURNER'S COME AND GONE—August Wilson's stirring play, the third in his series about the black experience in America in the twentieth century, is set in a boarding house in Pittsburgh in 1911. Its principal story is of a man who was captured and enslaved by the white plantation owner Joe Turner and who has been searching for his lost wife ever since he was set free. Delroy Lindo gives a strong performance in the role, sharing the honors with Ed Hall, who, as a benign healer, is the presiding spirit of the show. With Mel Winkler, L. Scott Caldwell, and Angela Bassett, among other good actors. Lloyd Richards was the excellent director. (4/11/88) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 3, and Saturdays at 2.)

LAMBS THEATRE COMPANY—Presenting **ST. HUGO OF CENTRAL PARK**, a comedy by Jeff Kindley. (Little Theatre at the Lambs, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. Wednesday through Saturday at 8. Matinées Wednesday and Saturday at 2, and Thursday at 1. Closes Saturday, May 21.)

MACBETH—The much-talked-about vehicle for Christopher Plummer and Glenda Jackson is not, as one might have been led to expect from the adverse publicity, giggle-makingly bad, merely uniformly and numbingly boring. No one (least of all Shakespeare) is well served by the production, which received "original direction" from Kenneth Frankel, "additional direction" from Zoe Caldwell, and uncredited direction from Robin Phillips. (5/9/88) (Mark Hellinger, 237 W. 51st St. 246-0102. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8.

Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

MADAME DE SADE—The Pan Asian Rep's production of Yukio Mishima's 1965 play. Translated from the Japanese by Donald Keene. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 245-2660. Tuesday through Saturday at 8. Matinée Saturday at 2. Closes Saturday, May 21.)

M. BUTTERFLY—David Henry Hwang's funny, mysterious, and often beautiful play is based on an actual case: in 1964, a French diplomat took as his mistress a star of the Beijing Opera, and some twenty years later—when they were both charged with being spies—discovered that "she" was a he. John Lithgow, in the leading role, gives an exceptional performance, and so does B. D. Wong as his lover. Lori Tan Chinn, George N. Martin, and Rose Gregorio give them sound support. (4/11/88) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

THE NO-FRILLS REVUE—An unpretentious, jokey show conceived and directed by Martin Charnin. Most of the lively songs—words and music—were written by Mr. Charnin, and the two funniest sketches were contributed by Thomas Meehan. (2/22/88) (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

OIL CITY SYMPHONY—Mike Craver, Mark Hardwick, Debra Monk, and Mary Murfitt, gifted and sophisticated singers and instrumentalists, appear as a quartet of dedicated hicks reuniting at their small-town high school in this very funny, very musical musical. Mr. Hardwick and Miss Monk, by the way, are alumni of "Pump Boys and Dinettes" of blessed memory. (1/18/88) (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA—The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets (by Maria Björnson), everything about the show is negligible, including the overhyped performances by Michael Crawford and Sarah Brightman in the leading roles. Patty Cohenour substitutes for Miss Brightman at the Thursday evening and Saturday matinee performances. (2/8/88) (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

THE ROAD TO MECCA—An absorbing, if somewhat elusive, play by the South African dramatist Athol Fugard, about an aging woman sculptor who is mystical and independent, and who resists the attempts of a local minister to persuade her to go into an old-people's home. The performances, by Yvonne Bryceland, Mr. Fugard himself, and Amy Irving, as a young disciple of the sculptor, are impeccable. Mr. Fugard directed. (4/25/88) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

ROMANCE/ROMANCE—A pair of charming one-act musicals that have travelled successfully from Off to Broadway. Scott Bakula and Alison Fraser are as romantic as required in the leading roles. Barry Harman wrote the clever books and lyrics, and Keith Herrmann wrote the engaging scores. Mr. Harman directed. (5/16/88) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

SARAFINA!—This South African musical, an explosion of talent, was conceived, written, and directed by Mbongeni Ngema, who also, with Hugh Masekela, composed and arranged the score. It is a show about a show that is put on by a brave group of high-school students in Soweto, and that dramatizes the events in their lives. The events are bleak, but the spirits are blazing, and the acting, dancing, and singing, to a local form of popular music called Mbanga, are a wonder. (11/9/87) (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednes-

days and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

A SHAYNA MAIDEL—A well-wrought and deeply moving play by Barbara Lebow about a Polish-Jewish family torn apart by the events of the Hitler era. The production is beautifully directed by Mary B. Robinson and is enhanced by two extraordinary performances: one from Gordana Rashovich as a concentration-camp survivor and the other from Paul Sparer as the father who failed to get her and her mother out of Poland. The year 1946 is perfectly evoked by William Barclay's setting. Bring lots of Kleenex to this one, but expect to leave uplifted. (11/30/87) (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

SPEED-THE-PLOW—David Mamet's satire on Hollywood is just as scathing, just as acute as his "Glengarry Glen Ross," and even funnier, if that can be imagined. Under Gregory Mosher, Joe Mantegna and Ron Silver give stunning performances as a pair of sleazy producers, and Madonna does well, too, as a wide-eyed secretary. (5/16/88) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6277. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

SPOILS OF WAR—A new play by Michael Weller. The cast, which includes Kate Nelligan, Larry Bryggman, and Christopher Collet, is directed by Austin Pendleton. Opens Tuesday, May 17. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)

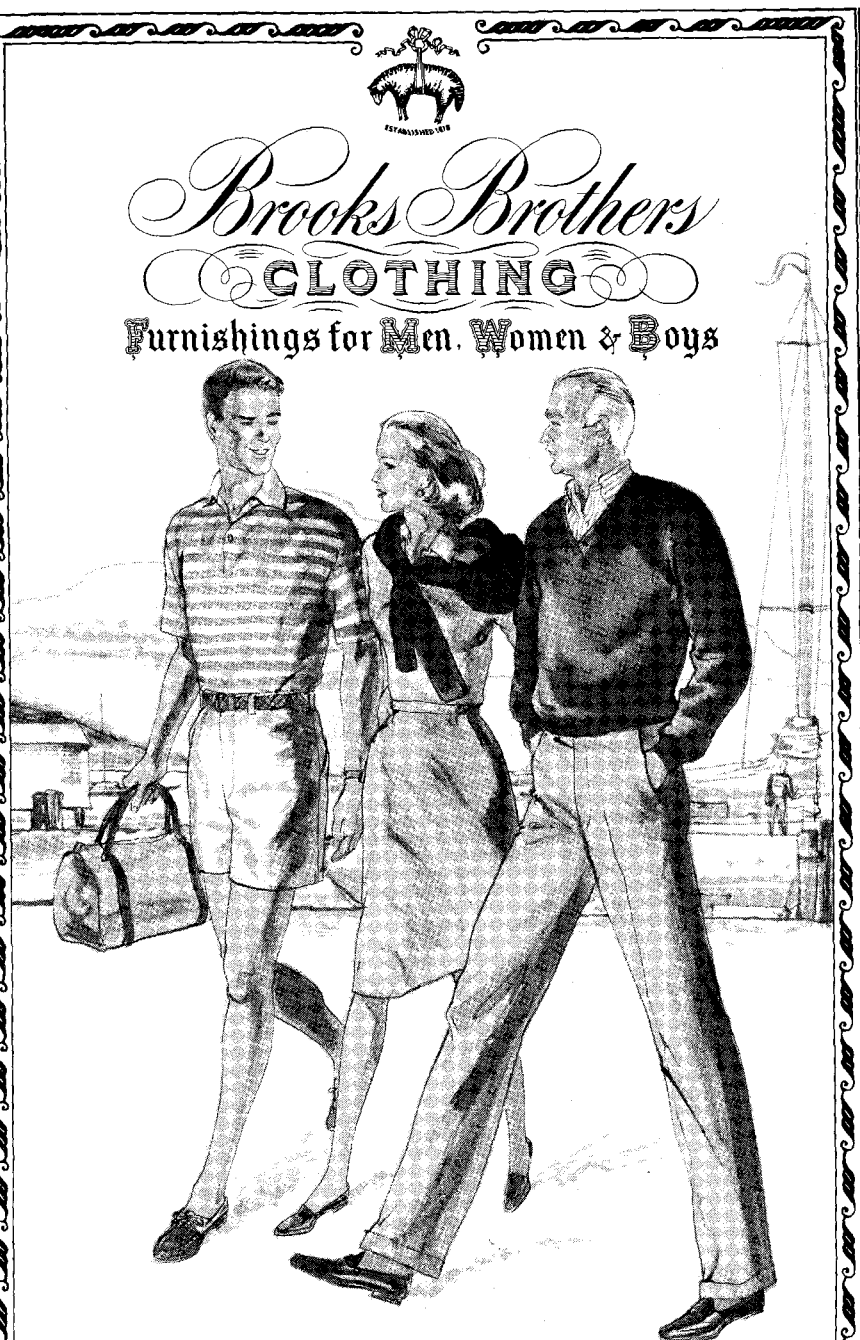
A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE—A pedestrian revival of the Tennessee Williams classic, directed by Nikos Psacharopoulos. You're better off seeing the 1951 movie. (3/28/88) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200. Tuesday through Saturday at 8. Matinees Wednesday and Saturday at 2, and Sunday at 3. Closes Sunday, May 22.)

TAMARA—A participatory theatrical encounter, in which the audience must literally follow the characters as they move from room to room in what is supposed to be Gabriele D'Annunzio's villa. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. 628-8334. Mondays through Wednesdays, and Fridays, at 8; Saturdays at 6 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinees Wednesdays, except May 25, at 2, and Sunday, May 22, at 3.)

THREE WAYS HOME—Mary McDonnell, S. Epatha Merkerson, and Malcolm-Jamal Warner in a play by Casey Kurti. (Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinees Sundays at 3.)

A WALK IN THE WOODS—Lee Blessing's absorbing play is set near Geneva and consists entirely of the conversations, over a year or so, of an American and a Soviet diplomat who have gone there to negotiate an arms treaty. No agreement is reached, but a friendship grows and deepens. Under the direction of Des McAnuff, Sam Waterston and Robert Prosky give distinguished performances. (3/14/88) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

LONG RUNS—BROADWAY BOUND: Neil Simon retains his accustomed skill at comedy but has wisely suppressed his weakness for surefire gags in a touching and unexpectedly serious study of a family—presumably the playwright's—as it begins to fall apart in Brooklyn in the nineteen-forties. Gene Saks directed. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Mondays through Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) ... **CATS:** A musical version of T. S. Eliot's "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats." Score by Andrew Lloyd Webber, choreography by Gillian Lynne, and direction (and some lyrics) by Trevor Nunn. A superb spectacle, which may run for many more years and give cats the right to vote and hold office. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) ... **A CHORUS LINE:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) ... **DRIVING MISS DAISY:** Frances Sternhagen and



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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE—Cont'd

Earle Hyman star in Alfred Uhry's play, which tells of the growing attachment of a cranky old woman in Atlanta to her black chauffeur. Directed by Ron Lagomarsino. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)... **THE FANTASTICKS:** This longest of long runs recently celebrated its twenty-eighth birthday. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.)... **FENCES:** Billy Dee Williams has the lead in August Wilson's powerful play. Lloyd Richards directed. (46th Street Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. 246-0102. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)... **42ND STREET:** Pleasantly old-fashioned choreography by the late Gower Champion and a few classic songs enliven an otherwise inert pastiche of the Warner Brothers movie that made Ruby Keeler a star. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 398-0280. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8:15. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:15, and Sundays at 3.)... **ME AND MY GIRL:** A silly chestnut of a British musical, dating back to the thirties. With Jim Dale. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 246-0102. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)... **LES MISERABLES:** Gary Morris and Anthony Crivello star in the musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel, but the real standouts of the production are the settings, by John Napier, and the lighting, by David Hersey. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays at 2.)... **NONSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)... **STARLIGHT EXPRESS:** A bore on roller skates. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)... **STEEL MAGNOLIAS:** This first play by Robert Harling is set in a beauty shop in a small town in Louisiana, and consists mainly of the often amusing, wisecracking chatter of the proprietress, her assistant, and four steady customers. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 6 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

MISCELLANY

MICHAEL FEINSTEIN IN CONCERT—A program of popular songs of the twenties, thirties, and forties. Feinstein's knowledge of the genre is exhaustive: he knows all the old songs and their intros, so the show becomes a meeting place for the timeless and the charmingly dated—a must for lovers of show tunes and the people who wrote them. (5/9/88) (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 9:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

KAYE BALLARD: WORKING 42ND STREET AT LAST!—Miss Ballard, with her accompanists Arthur Siegel, piano, and Miss Faun, cello. Opens Monday, May 16, and will run through Sunday, June 12. (Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 564-8038. Mondays and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays at 5 and Sundays at 3.)

WITHOUT YOU I'M NOTHING—Sandra Bernhard in a one-woman show. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477. Wednesdays and Thursdays at 8; Fridays and Saturdays at 8 and 10:30; and Sundays at 5:30 and 9.)

JACKIE MASON'S "THE WORLD ACCORDING TO ME!"—A return engagement of the comedian's one-man show. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-4099. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

LIGHT OPERA OF MANHATTAN—Presenting Victor Herbert's NAUGHTY MARIETTA. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000. Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays at 2 and Saturdays and Sundays at 3:30. Closes Sunday, May 29.)

TEN PERCENT REVUE—A musical revue by Tom



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	16	17	18	19	20	21
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Wilson Weinberg about gay life. (Susan Bloch, 307 W. 26th St. 279-4200. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 4.)

BITTERSUITE: ONE MORE TIME—A pleasant revue of songs about middle age by Elliott Weiss (music) and Michael Champagne (lyrics). (Palsson's Supper Club, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 5:30 and 8.)

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET—Tuesday evening, May 17: Divertimento from "Le Baiser de la Fée," "Barber Violin Concerto," "Danbury Mix" (with members of the Paul Taylor Dance Company), and "Western Symphony."... Wednesday evening, May 18: "Bugaku," "Tanzspiel," and "Who Cares?"... Thursday evening, May 19: "Walpurgisnacht Ballet," "Barber Violin Concerto," "Danbury Mix" (with members of the Paul Taylor Dance Company), and "I'm Old Fashioned."... Friday evening, May 20: "Square Dance," "Baroque Variations," "The Charming Dances," and "Gershwin Concerto."... Saturday matinée, May 21: Divertimento from "Le Baiser de la Fée," "Danbury Mix" (with members of the Paul Taylor Dance Company), and "I'm Old Fashioned."... Saturday evening, May 21: "Square Dance," "The Waltz Project," and "Gershwin Concerto."... Sunday matinée, May 22: "Walpurgisnacht Ballet," "Rhapsody in Blue," and "Ecstatic Orange."... Sunday evening, May 22: "Bugaku," "Tanzspiel," and "Who Cares?"... Tuesday evening, May 24: "Bugaku," "Ives, Songs," and "Gershwin Concerto."... Wednesday evening, May 25: "Jewels." (New York State Theatre, 870-5570. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 1. Through Sunday, June 26.)

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE—Monday evening, May 16: "Les Sylphides," "Stravinsky Violin Concerto," and "Raymonda Grand Pas Classique."... Tuesday evening, May 17: Wednesday matinée and evening, May 18; and Thursday evening, May 19: "La Bayadère."... Friday evening, May 20: "Raymonda Grand Pas Classique," "Swan Lake Pas de Deux," "The Informer," and "Gaité Parisienne."... Saturday matinée, May 21: "Bruch Violin Concerto No. 1," "Swan Lake Pas de Deux," "The Informer," and "Gaité Parisienne."... Saturday evening, May 21: "Gala Performance," "The Informer," and "Symphonie Concertante."... Monday and Tuesday evenings, May 23-24, and Wednesday matinée and evening, May 25: "Don Quixote (Kitri's Wedding)." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Eve-

nings at 8. Matinées at 2. Through Saturday, June 11.)

MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP—A one-week engagement of a single program. Three New York premieres—"Sonata for Clarinet and Piano," "Fugue and Fantasy," and "Strict Songs" (with the New York City Gay Men's Chorus)—"New Love Song Waltzes," and "One Charming Night." With the Orchestra of St. Luke's. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Tuesday, May 17, at 7; Wednesday through Friday, May 18-20, at 8; Saturday, May 21, at 2 and 8; and Sunday, May 22, at 2.)

ANNABELLE GAMSON / DANCE SOLOS—A company of solo performers in a two-week engagement that opens on Thursday, May 19, and will run through Sunday, May 29. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 20th St. Thursday through Saturday, May 19-21, at 8, and Sunday, May 22, at 5. For information about tickets, call 924-0077.)

CITY CENTER—Two dance companies and a performance artist—Tuesday, May 17, and Friday, May 20, at 8: **BILL T. JONES/ARNIE ZANE & CO.** in "The Gift/No God Logic," "Holzer Duet," "Red Room," "Like in Egypt," "Prejudice," and "The History of Collage."... Wednesday and Thursday, May 18-19, at 8, and Sunday, May 22, at 3: **BILL IRWIN** in "Largely/New York."... Saturday, May 21, at 2 and 8: **LAURA DEAN DANCERS AND MUSICIANS** in "Equator," "Magnetic," and "Impact." (131 W. 55th St. 246-8989.)

JOYCE THEATRE—Performances by six contemporary dance companies—**STEPHANIE SKURA & COMPANY:** Tuesday, May 17, at 7:30... **WENDY PERRON DANCE COMPANY:** Wednesday, May 18, at 8... **REBECCA KELLY DANCE COMPANY:** Thursday, May 19, at 8... **SOLOMONS COMPANY/DANCE:** Friday, May 20, at 8... **CREACH/KOESTER:** Saturday, May 21, at 8... **PEARSON DANCE COMPANY:** Sunday, May 22, at 7:30. (175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)

NIGHT LIFE

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town... Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**MONTGOMERY, PLANT & STRITCH**, a one-man, two-woman vocal trio, sing and patter in close harmony in the woody nook known as the Oak Room Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen. Dining.

ANGRY SQUIRE, 216 Seventh Ave., at 23rd St. (242-9066)—A nautically appointed bar and restaurant. Any swaying you may notice yourself doing is probably generated by the musicians, who perform amidsthips on a railed-in platform. A little band run by pianist **DUKE JORDAN** (a Charlie Parker sideman in the forties) and bop-era saxophonist **SAHIB SHIHAB** and featuring singer **LODI CARR** will be aboard Friday and Saturday, May 20-21. First set at ten.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A neat-as-a-pin cabaret on the edge of Chelsea, near the flower and fur markets. **KAREN AKERS**, a tall, slim model of cabaret chic, sings at nine Tuesdays through Thursdays and at nine and eleven Fridays and Saturdays. **JAY LEONHART**, a bassist who sometimes doubles as a singer, performs some of his quick-witted songs (about an encounter between a Lester Lanin fanatic and a big band led by Louis Bellson, about a man pounding on a money-eating pay phone) with pianist **MIKE RENZI** at six-thirty Wednesdays through Saturdays.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A really blue but not really New York jazz club; the idea for the brass plaques that are engraved with the names of visiting jazz stars and embedded in the blue tables appears to have been borrowed from Hollywood. **RAY BROWN** (bass) and **HERB ELLIS** (guitar), who were running mates in Oscar Peterson's mid-fifties trio, work with **MONTY ALEXANDER**, a Peterson admirer, Tuesday through Sunday, May 17-22; they'll be spelled by singer **ERNESTINE ANDERSON** and her three backers. Music from nine. Dining.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Music for many kinds of people, including unreconstructed folkies, rock-and-roll fundamentalists, Village bopcats, and followers of **JOHN CALE**, the Welsh art-rock person known for his fierce neo-primitivist wailing and his sweet electric-violola playing. He's here with his band, which features guitarist **CHRIS SPEDDING**, on Saturday, May 21. The rest of the lineup: Tuesday and Wednesday, May 17-18, rock guitarist **JOE SATRIANI**; Friday, May 20, jazz guitarist **JOHN SCOFIELD**; and Sunday and Monday, May 22-23, **KRIS KRISTOFFERSON**. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Dining.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A crowded, duskily lit neighborhood bar, where pianists, bassists, and, occasionally, horn players compete for your ear with professional conversationalists. Truth and beauty usually prevail. **FREDDY COLE**, a pianist and singer who has some of his older brother Nat's easy, drifting way with a ballad, is here with his trio through Saturday, May 21; **JOANNE BRACKEEN**, a pianist of million-noted, un-Cole-like brilliance, takes over on Monday, May 23. First set at nine-forty-five. Dining.

CARLOS I, 432 Sixth Ave., at 10th St. (982-3260)—Everything about this club is nice: the long rows of tables covered with pink linen, the bijou bandstand, the view from the bar of the bandstand, and the view out the window of Vaux and Withers' gabled Victorian courthouse. **HAMMET BLUIETT**, the bearded baritone voice of the World Saxophone Quartet, leads a big band on Mondays. **BENNY CARTER**, who turned eighty last year and whose alto-saxophone playing remains a model of old-time grace and light-footed swing, is here with a quartet Tuesdays through Sundays. Music from nine-thirty. Dining.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—**BOBBY SHORT**, a prince among café singers, is presiding over the little principality called the Café Carlyle. **BEVERLY PEER** (bass) and **ROBBIE SCOTT** (drums) flank him. Sets at ten and midnight Tuesdays through Saturdays. On Friday and Saturday, May 20-21, Marti Stevens substitutes for Mr. Short. ... ♪ Across the hall, in the Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** sings and plays the piano from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Through a heavy-duty steel door, through a green Plexiglas door, down a long, narrow, fun-house passageway (mirrors in which you can watch yourself multiply; corrugated-metal siding you can rattle), and down a flight of stairs, you'll find this velvet-and-mirror-walled *boite*. Pianist **KENNY WERNER** leads a trio Tuesday through Thursday, May 17-19; **CECIL MC BEE**, a bassist who has long moved in fast modern circles (with the likes of Pharoah Sanders, Miles Davis, Joanne Brackeen), heads up a quartet Friday through Sunday, May 20-22; **ASTRUD GILBERTO**, a flower of the bossa-nova movement, sings in her soft, low, shy voice starting Tuesday, May 24. Mondays are in the hands of guitarist **LES PAUL**. Music from eight. Dining.

FORTUNE GARDEN PAVILION, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—Two nice things not known to be available in the next world—Chinese food and American jazz—are here. A patch of midtown sky is visible through the greenhouse roof. **JUDY CARMICHAEL**, a young stride-piano specialist, leads a trio Tuesday through Thursday, May 17-19; **TERRY WALDO**, another early-jazz enthusiast, works Friday and Saturday, May 20-21; and starting Tuesday, May 24, **ROLAND HANNA** will be on duty. Sets at nine-thirty and eleven.

J's, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—A room where the tenth letter of the alphabet (uncapped and disguised as a quarter note) turns up often: on doors, window shades, matchbooks. It's also a room with a view (of Broadway) and with jazz (mostly of the mainstream type). **JOHN PIZZARELLI**, a guitarist whose models include his easygoing dad, Bucky, and a singer whose inspirations include Nat Cole ("Frim Fram Sauce" and "Straighten Up and Fly Right" are in his repertoire), is here on Thursdays with his trio. **DICK HYMAN**, one of the wonders of jazz piano, will be at the dining-room grand on Monday, May 23. Music from eight Mondays

through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

JAN WALLMAN'S, 49 W. 44th St. (764-8930)—A cozy room for singers and their followers, cheek by jowl with the Iroquois Hotel. The schedule: Monday, May 16, cornettist **DICK SUDHALTER** and friends; Wednesday, May 18, **BOB STEWART**; Thursday, May 19, **BARBARA LEA**, with pianist **WES MCAFEE**; Saturday, May 21, **JUDY KRESTON** and **DAVID LAHM**; and Wednesday, May 25, **NANCY REED**, with pianist **ROGER KELLAWAY**. Shows at nine and eleven Mondays through Saturdays. Dining. Closed Sundays.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Turn-of-the-century New York Sunday *Herald* posters and Hirschfeld caricatures on the walls, and, next to the brass-railed partition between the bar and the dining room, a modern Steinway. **JUNIOR MANCE** works out on it, with his longtime partner, bassist **MARTY RIVERA**, at his side Tuesday through Saturday, May 17-21; **LOU LEVY**, an accompanist for Ella Fitzgerald and Peggy Lee in the fifties and sixties, comes in with **MICHAEL MOORE** on Tuesday, May 24. **HARRY CONNICK, JR.**, a young New Orleans pianist (he studied with Ellis Marsalis) and fashion plate (in the smart-tickler tradition), flies all by himself on Sundays and Mondays. Music from nine-thirty.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—Probably the only place in town that features avant-garde jazz, Breathe Easy medicinal tea, medicinal beer, and elbowroom. **CONRAD CUMMINGS**, a young classical composer whose work is described in *AmeriGrove* as "amiable, witty, and joyous," leads singers and players through his song cycles "Positions 1956" and "Insertions" on Tuesday, May 17. **ALBERT MANGELSDORFF**, an innovative German trombonist, gives solo performances on Friday and Saturday, May 20-21. Music from eight. ... ♪ At 49 E. Houston St., in a space improvised out of a neon-art shop and called for the nonce the Knitting Factory Annex, an all-star downtown-Manhattan band made up of **JOHN ZORN** (reeds), **BILL FRISSELL** (guitar), **WAYNE HORVITZ** (keyboards), **FRED FRITH** (bass), and **JOEY BARON** (drums) raises Cain at nine and eleven Wednesday through Saturday, May 18-21.

LONE STAR CAFÉ, 61 Fifth Ave., at 13th St. (242-1664)—Texas-like in significant respects, though not in the open-spaces-and-clear-sight-lines department, in which it is New York-like. **HANK BALLARD**, the gent who did "Work with Me, Annie" and "The Twist" and other hot stuff back in the fifties, will be here with his backup group, the Midnighters, on Thursday, May 19; the bluegrass band **COUNTRY GAZETTE** performs on Sunday, May 22. Music after nine. Dining.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—Unicorns and lions on the walls, well-heeled cats on the banquettes, and **JULIE WILSON** on the bandstand. Miss Wilson, a singer who's always

in motion and whose emotions are always visible, is concentrating on the emotionally intricate songs of Stephen Sondheim. Shows Tuesday through Saturday, May 17-21, at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. Dining. Closed Sundays.

MIKELL'S, 760 Columbus Ave., at 97th St. (864-8832)—A spiffy uptown bar and restaurant, with signed photographs of some swinging non-musicians on the walls (Reggie Jackson smiling shyly, Dave Winfield tuning up in the cage) and some heavy hitters on the bandstand. **ART BLAKEY**, all hard-bop muscle and drive, leads his young bunch of **JAZZ MESSENGERS** on Friday and Saturday, March 20-21. Music from about ten until two.

RITZ, 119 E. 11th St. (254-2800)—Up-to-the-minute rock in a half-century-old ballroom. It's a place for people who don't mind taking their rock standing up; the few seats that exist—in the balcony—are reserved for the usual suspects. **BURNING SPEAR**, the nom de guitare of a Jamaican mystic-reggae-ist named Winston Rodney, performs on Tuesday, May 17; Throwing Muses, a Boston band whose muse seems to be the erratic one who frequents undergraduate poetry-writing classes, visit on Friday, May 20. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at nine, and Fridays and Saturdays at eleven.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A musical melting pot: samba bands, African pop bands, reggae people, zydeco outfits, and salsa ensembles all pass through this former luncheonette. Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from ten Fridays and Saturdays. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

SPEAKEASY, 107 Macdougall St. (598-9670)—Outside, on the boulevards of Greenwich Village, heedless local youths and tourists from New Jersey make mad music; inside, dulcimers are hammered, fiddles are fiddled, folk songs are sung, and Professor Irwin Corey sometimes pops his head in to explain what a light bulb is (a thing that sucks up darkness until it goes out). **JOSH WHITE, JR.**, the folksinging son of the South Carolina blues singer, will be around on Friday, May 20. Music from about eight-thirty. Dining.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A convivial and crowded jazz club—but not so crowded, as Yogi Berra said of another night spot, that nobody comes here anymore. **MC COY TYNER**, a pianist whose thundering, fervent, rhythmically insistent style works like an incantation on many people, holds forth Tuesdays through Sundays. Mondays have been turned over to singer **DAKOTA STATON**. Shows from ten. Dining.

SWEETWATERS, 170 Amsterdam Ave., at 67th St. (873-4100)—What would a night club be without smoke, mirrors, and a white piano? It wouldn't be this sleek jazz and soul room. **CARMEN LUNDY**, a young jazz singer in whom you can hear a little Sarah Vaughan (she



GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

NIGHT LIFE—Cont'd

likes to swoop down to the grand bottom note) and see a little Betty Carter (she's lithe and slinky), performs Thursday through Saturday, May 19-21. Music after nine. Dining.

TRAMPS, 125 E. 15th St. (777-5077)—A low-ceilinged, plain but functional blues and rock outpost. The decorative flourishes include pictures of Big Joe Turner, a Mets pennant, roadhouse neon, and a fiddle-footed black cat, which roams the premises looking for a seat better than the one it just abandoned. The **SURREAL MC COYS**, a local country-rock outfit, have the floor on Mondays, May 16 and 23; a Chicago blues band led by a piano man called **PROFESSOR EDDIE LUSK** holds forth on Friday and Saturday, May 20-21. Shows from nine-thirty.

VILLAGE GATE, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—Downstairs, in the gym-size room where hep cat d.j. Symphony Sid used to spend his Monday evenings hosting Latin-jazz shows, Latin music is still the rule on Mondays. On May 23, **TITO PUENTE** and **YOMO TORO** and their bands will be present, along with guitarist **KEVIN EUBANKS**, the guest soloist. **ELLIS MARSALES**, the father of some celebrated horn players and a teacher of note, directs the Virginia Commonwealth University Jazz Orchestra on Wednesday, May 18. One flight up, in the Terrace Bar, where business and conversation are often at boom level, pianist **KENNY BARRON** and bassist **LARRY RIDLEY** are on duty Tuesday through Sunday, May 17-22, from about ten.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—One of the few places below the surface of New York that deserve landmark status. It's also one of the few places anywhere that have a notable (if that's the right word) light fixture—one that Charles Mingus K.O'd while trying to reason with the proprietor, and that the proprietor, a preservationist as well as a businessman, decided to leave in Mingus-ized condition. Pianist **STEVE KUHNS** works with the ace rhythm team of **RON CARTER** (bass) and **AL FOSTER** (drums) Tuesday through Sunday, May 17-22; **RAY ANDERSON**, a trombonist with a frisky, knock-about style, descends the stairs with his quartet on Tuesday, May 24. Mondays belong to **MEL LEWIS**'s big band. Music after ten.

WEST END, 2911 Broadway, at 113th St. (666-8750)—Those who can resist the temptations of the large barroom here—pinball, video games, a dialogue with a budding deconstructionist from Columbia U.—will find another, smaller room, where jazz musicians hold sway. **PAULA LOCKHEART** sings on Tuesday, May 17, and trumpeter **JIMMY OWENS** leads a quartet Wednesday through Sunday, May 18-22. Music from about nine. Dining.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Pasta and jazz. The latter emanates from a passageway between a front-room bar and a back room reserved for trenchermen. Pianist **JOHN CAMPBELL** and bassist **STEVE LA SPINA** are on duty through Saturday, May 21. On Sundays, the long-running duo of **GENE BERTONCINI** (guitar) and **MICHAEL MOORE** (bass) have the floor. Music weeknights from eight and Sundays from seven.

JAZZ / ROCK / PERSONAL APPEARANCES / PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN—Madison Square Garden. 563-8300. Monday, May 16, Wednesday and Thursday, May 18-19, and Sunday and Monday, May 22-23, all at 7:30.

SURVIVAL RESEARCH LABORATORIES—A San Francisco-based performance group presenting its mechanical creations, including the one-ton Walking Machine, the Shock Wave Cannon, and the Sprinkler from Hell. (Shea Stadium Parking Lot. Tuesday, May 17, at 9; rain date May 19. For information about tickets, call 219-1222.)

THE TROPICANA—Fifty-seven Cuban dancers, singers, and musicians. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Tuesday through Friday, May 17-20, at 8; Saturday, May 21, at 2 and 8; and Sunday, May 22, at 4.)

ARTHUR RUSSELL—Alternative Museum, 17 White St. 966-4444. Wednesday, May 18, at 8.

ADAM MAKOWICZ—Wednesday, May 18: With Charlie Haden, Cecil McBee, and Al Foster.

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... Thursday, May 19: With the Chester String Quartet, Mr. Foster, and Mr. Haden.

... Friday, May 20: With Duffy Jackson and Benny Carter. ... Saturday, May 21: With John Blake, Jamil Nasser, and Mr. Foster. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Evenings at 8:30.)

JULIO IGLESIAS—Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 757-3100. Thursday through Monday, May 19-23, at 8. Through Sunday, May 29.

TONY BENNETT—Lehman College Concert Hall, the Bronx. 960-8833. Friday, May 20, at 8.

CHARLIE BYRD TRIO—Jazzport, 210 Front St. 608-7889. Friday and Saturday, May 20-21, at 8 and 10.

MANHATTAN MARIMBA QUARTET—La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Friday and Saturday, May 20-21, at 10.

ALABAMA, GEORGE STRAIT, THE JUDDS, AND RANDY TRAVIS—Madison Square Garden. Saturday, May 21, at 7.

THE ART FARMER QUINTET AND THE MARIAN MCPARTLAND QUARTET—Schimmel Center for the Arts, Pace University, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 488-1715. Sunday, May 22, at 2:30.

BENEFIT CONCERT—Sweet Honey in the Rock. (Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. 864-0372. Sunday, May 22, at 5.)

ART

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

FRANK W. BENSON (1862-1951)—Impressionist plein-air paintings of the artist's children and grandchildren at their summer residence in Maine. Through June 11. (Spanierman, 50 E. 78th St.)

JACOBO BORGES—New paintings in which a central figure is surrounded by blurred, pale apparitions. Through June 30. (CDS Gallery, 13 E. 75th St. Open Mondays.)

JOHN CONSTABLE (1776-1837)—Over a hundred paintings and works on paper. Through June 25. (Salander-O'Reilly, 22 E. 80th St. Open Mondays.)

PAUL DELVAUX AND RENÉ MAGRITTE (1898-1967)—Paintings and drawings by these Belgian Surrealists. Through June 18. (Elkon, 18 E. 81st St.)

SIMON DINNENSTEIN—Recent stylized still-lives, portraits, and imaginary tableaux by an artist who combines conté crayons, colored pencils, and pastels in his drawings. Through June 3. (Staempfli, 47 E. 77th St.)

JAMES GILLRAY (1756-1815) and **HONORÉ DAUMIER** (1808-79)—Graphics by two caricaturists. Through June 6. (McCarron, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. Open Mondays.)

AHARON GLUSKA—A three-gallery show of new nonobjective paintings on paper and on can

vas. Through May 28. (Urdang, 23 E. 74th St. ... Stark, 568 Broadway. Opens at noon. ... Siegeltuch, 568 Broadway, entrance on Prince St.)

JANE KAPLOWITZ—New drawings. Through June 11. (McCoy, 19 E. 71st St.)

LOIS LANE—Dark new paintings and drawings; some have partially discernible human and bovine figures. Through Saturday, May 21. (Mathes, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

PIERRE LESIEUR—Loosely executed (in oil washes or pencil) interiors and still-lives. Through Saturday, May 21. (David Findlay, 984 Madison Ave., at 77th St. Open Mondays.)

JOEL CORCOS LEVY—Many small oils of seascapes and bucolic landscapes on plywood, the surface of which has been primed to bring up the grain. Through June 4. (Babcock, 20 E. 67th St. Closes at 4 on Saturdays.)

ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG—New drawings. Through June 2. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

DAVID SECOMBE—An installation, plus maquettes. Through May 28. (Sculpture Center, 167 E. 69th St.)

VACLAV VYTLACIL (1893-1984) / **JOAN THORNE**—Paintings from the twenties and thirties by this American modernist. Through June 10. / Abstract paintings and pastels. Through May 26. (Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St.)

MAX WEBER (1881-1961)—Works on paper. Through June 4. (Forum, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

GROUP SHOW—Drawings by Klee, Picasso, Matisse, Pollock, van Gogh, and others. Through May 26. (Acquavella, 18 E. 79th St. Open Mondays.)

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

ANNE ABRONS / ROBERT BERLIND—Symbolic still-life paintings by a realist. / Paintings depicting oak trees and vineyards in Provence. Through Wednesday, May 25. (Ruth Siegel, 24 W. 57th St.)

ANNE ARNOLD / PETER LOFTUS—Animals carved in wood. / Romantic landscapes. Through Saturday, May 21. (Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St.)

LUIS CRUZ AZACETA—New paintings on unstretched canvases, including "Life Is a Series of Holes" and "Latin American Victims of Dictators, Oppression, Torture, and Murder." Through May 28. (Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St.)

ANTHONY CARO—Seven abstract sculptures in waxed steel which were composed with the temple of Zeus at Olympia in mind. Through June 10. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

LEONORA CARRINGTON—Recent paintings and works on paper by a Surrealist. Through June 4. (Brewster, 41 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

JOHN DUFF / WILLIAM BAZIOTES (1912-63)—Painted fibreglass wall sculptures by an artist whose repertoire includes oblate forms and spirals. / Works on paper. Through May 28. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

JACOB LANDAU—New works on paper. Through June 4. (Sumers, 50 W. 57th St.)

JULIO LARRAZ—New realist paintings. Through June 4. (Haime, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

HENRY MOORE (1898-1986)—Sculptures, drawings, and prints. Through June 15. (Heidenberg, 50 W. 57th St.)

ISAMU NOGUCHI—New bronzes. Through June 25. (Herstand, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

HARRY ORLYK—Overcast skies and weathered farmhouses in upstate New York are the subjects of these new paintings. Through May 28. (Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St.)

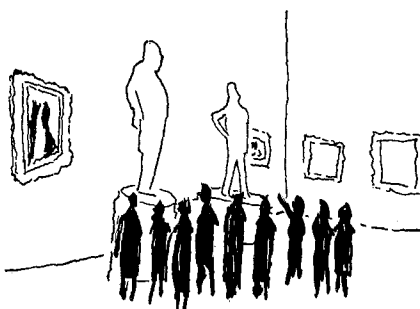
GABOR PETERDI / JEREMY GILBERT-ROLFE—Paintings. / Nonobjective works on paper. Through May 28. (Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

PICASSO (1881-1973)—Paintings, sculptures, and prints from 1950 to 1973. Through June 17. (Krugier, 41 E. 57th St.)

TONY ROBBIN—Geometric welded-steel-and-Plexiglas sculptures that, with some help from special lighting and 3-D glasses, suggest four dimensions. Through Saturday, May 21. (De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St.)

FRANÇOIS ROUAN—Encaustic paintings and drawings. Through June 4. (Matisse, 41 E. 57th St.)

GEORGE SEGAL—Sculptures, one of which is a



twenty-six-foot-long urban tableau entitled "The Street." Through June 4. (Janis, 110 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

TONY SIANI—Mixed-medium reliefs, many of them Biblical scenes. Through June 14. (Ross, 50 W. 57th St.)

JOHN SLOAN (1871-1951)—Paintings and works on paper. Through May 28. (Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

JOYCE TREIMAN—Recent paintings. Through Saturday, May 21. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

ANDY WARHOL (1930-87)—Line drawings. Through May 27. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)... Silk screens the artist made from F.B.I. Most-Wanted posters. Through June 30. (Gagosian, 521 W. 23rd St., near Eleventh Ave.)

WILLIAM WEGMAN—New paintings. Through May 28. (Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays.)

GROUP SHOWS—At the **ASSOCIATED AMERICAN ARTISTS**, 20 W. 57th St.: Prints by the American modernists Stuart Davis, Charles Sheeler, Marguerite Zorach, Max Weber, and others. Through June 3. ... **GALERIE LELONG**, 20 W. 57th St.: Abstract paintings by Peter Halley, Sherrie Levine, and Christopher Wool, among others. Through June 4. ... **GRAND CENTRAL ART GALLERIES**, 24 W. 57th St.: American Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings, including works by Childe Hassam, George Inness, Theresa Bernstein, and Gladys Rockmore Davis. Through May 28. (Open Mondays.) ... **SCHOELKOPF**, 50 W. 57th St.: Geometric abstractions dating from the thirties to 1960, including paintings by Eleanor de Laittre, Charles G. Shaw, and others, and a sculpture by Sidney Gordin. Through June 8. ... **TILTON**, 24 W. 57th St.: Paintings, drawings, and sculptures by Rebecca Purdum, Luigi Ontani, and Ruth Vollmer, among others. Through May 31.

SCULPTURE—Works by Richard Artschwager, Richard Deacon, Luciano Fabro, Claes Oldenburg, Giuseppe Penone, and Richard Serra. Through July 1. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

GALLERIES—SoHo

JOHN M. ARMLEDER—Paintings and sculptures. Through May 28. (Gibson, 568 Broadway.)

HOWARD BEN TRÉ—Abstract cast-glass sculptures. Through May 28. (Cowles, 420 West Broadway.)

JENNIFER BOLANDE—Movie marquees were the basis for three small works in this diverse show. Through Saturday, May 21. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

MICHAEL BOYD—Paintings, several of them inspired by French Gothic cathedrals. Through June 4. (Zarre, 379 West Broadway.)

JAMES COIGNARD—Abstract paintings and works on paper. Through May 28. (Nahan, 380 West Broadway. Open daily.)

XAVIER CORDERÓ—Half a chess set carved in basalt. The queen is about ten feet tall. Through June 11. (Blum Helman Warehouse, 80 Greene St.)

DENISE CORLEY / BETTI-SUE HERTZ—Self-portraits dating from 1977 to the present. / New works by an artist who juxtaposes painted wall sculptures with Cibachromes of Puerto Rican folk architecture found in New York City. Through June 4. (55 Mercer Street Gallery.)

DOROTHY DEHNER—Early surreal drawings, plus sculptures—one a nine-foot brushed-steel work entitled "Fist." Through May 28. (Twining, 568 Broadway.)

ELLEN DRISCOLL—Recent freestanding sculptures. Through Saturday, May 21. (Brandt, 568 Broadway.)

CHRISTIAN ECKART—Constructions incorporating sections of doors, moldings, and picture frames. Through May 28. (Audiello, 142 Greene St.)

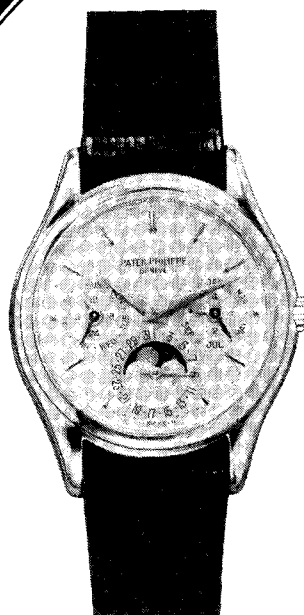
ERIC FISCHL—Figurative paintings. Through June 25. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

JOEL FISHER—Freestanding bronzes. Through Saturday, May 21. (Brown, 560 Broadway.)

GENERAL IDEA—A series of paintings based on Robert Indiana's "Love," in which "AIDS" has replaced "Love." Through June 4. (Koury Wingate, 578 Broadway.)

DEWITT GODFREY—Large-scale sculptures and drawings. Through May 28. (Erpf, 568 Broadway, entrance on Prince St.)

DON GUMMER—Large-scale freestanding wood



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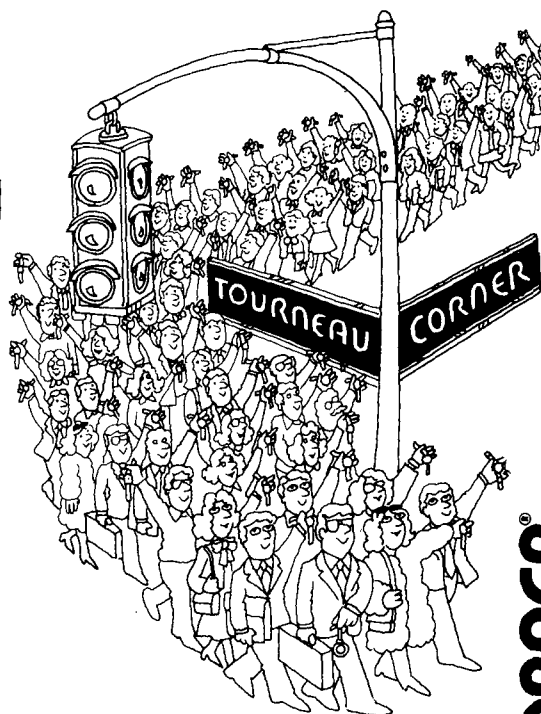
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TOURNEAU
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

ART—Cont'd

sculptures. Through June 11. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

DAVID HARE—Paintings and sculptures. Through May 28. (Gruenebaum, 415 West Broadway.)

JOHN HULTBERG—A retrospective of paintings. Through June 11. (Shapolsky, 99 Spring St. Opens at noon.)

BRIAN YOSHIMI ISOBÉ—Paintings and works on paper. Through June 7. (Perlow, 560 Broadway.)

ANDREW JANSONS—Densely painted abstractions. Through May 28. (M-13, at 72 Greene St.)

ILYA KARAKOV—For his first exhibition in the United States, this Russian artist has transformed the Feldman gallery into living quarters for ten fictitious tenants—one of them has built a catapult to launch himself into space, and another has never thrown anything away. Through June 4. (31 Mercer St.)

PAT LASCH—Cakes, hearts, and female figures cast in bronze, silver, or gold. Through June 4. (Pearl, 420 West Broadway.)

SOL LEWITT / ALICE AYCOCK—Large geometric painted wood constructions. / Drawings. Through May 28. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

CHRIS MACDONALD—Recent wood sculptures and works on paper. Through May 28. (Beitzel, 113 Greene St.)

DAVID MACH—An installation involving fifteen tons of magazines, a cast-iron bathtub, and a stuffed zebra. Through June 11. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

MATTA—Early paintings and drawings by this Chilean Surrealist. Through May 28. (Davidson, 415 West Broadway.)

HENRI MICHAUX (1899-1984)—Paintings and drawings. Through May 28. (Nolan, 560 Broadway.)

ROSEMARY NAEGELE—Realist paintings of Spanish rooftops. Through Wednesday, May 25. (Blue Mountain, 121 Wooster St. Opens daily, except Mondays, at noon.)

JOANNA POUSSETTE-DART—Abstract paintings. Through Tuesday, May 24. (Hanson, 415 West Broadway.)

MARKUS RAETZ—Works in various mediums. Through June 11. (Alexander, 59 Wooster St. A larger show is currently on view at The New Museum.)

MARION RANYAK / PHYLLIS JANTO—New landscapes. / Laminated and polychromed wood sculptures. Through Saturday, May 21. (SoHo 20, at 469 Broome St. Opens at noon; open Sundays, 1 to 4.)

ALLEN RUPPERSBERG—Collages inspired by the movie poster for "The Sky Above—The Mud Below," a 1959 documentary about New Guinea. Through May 28. (Pretto, 103 Sullivan St. Opens at 1.)

JANE SCHNEIDER—A series of wood sculptures of a mythical menagerie. Through June 4. (Kelly, 591 Broadway.)

JIM SULLIVAN—New paintings; in several of them a bowl of fruit hovers vividly in the foreground while scenes of dancing or conversation take place in a golden light behind it. Through June 15. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway.)

TARO SUZUKI—New sculptures. Through May 28. (Newburg, 580 Broadway.)

ROBERT THERRIEN—Paintings and sculptures. Through Saturday, May 21. (Castelli, 420 West Broadway.)

BERNARD TSCHUMI / MICHELE STUART—Architectural drawings and models. Through Saturday, May 21. / Paintings. Through May 28. (Proetch, 560 Broadway.)

NOT VITAL—New sculptures and drawings by this Swiss artist. Through Saturday, May 21. (Marcus, 578 Broadway.)

PHYLLIS WIENER / RICHARD S. ROTHSCHILD—Constructions. / Wood sculptures. Through May 28. (Pindar, 127 Greene St.)

GILBERTO ZORIO—New sculptures in various mediums. Through June 4. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

ZUSH—Works on paper in mixed mediums. Through May 28. (Kind, 136 Greene St.)

GROUP SHOWS—At the COOPER, 155 Wooster St.: Sculptures by Carl Andre, Donald Judd, and



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22	23	24	25			

Tony Smith. Through June 4. . . . **THE DRAWING CENTER**, 35 Wooster St.: A selection of sixty-nine drawings that the curator has categorized as art that copies art. Michelangelo, Dürer, Watteau, Cézanne, and Picasso are among the copiers. Through July 23. (Open Wednesday evenings until 8.)

OTHER GALLERIES

JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT—Paintings and works on paper. Through June 11. (Baghoomian, 611 Broadway.)

ZACHARY EHRENREICH—Dark, atmospheric paintings; in one, the Williamsburg Bridge hangs in the distance as two men play chess at the edge of the East River. Through June 14. (Neo Persona, 51 Hudson St. Opens at noon.)

MARY HEILMANN—Paintings. Through Sunday, May 22. (Hearn, 735 E. 9th St., just west of Avenue D. Opens at 1 Wednesdays through Sundays.)

KEVIN LARMON—New paintings. Through May 29. (Nature Morte, 204 E. 10th St. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)

CHRISTIAN MARCLAY—Sculptures that make use of objects having to do with sound: records, speakers, and gramophone parts, for instance. Through Saturday, May 21. (Cugliani, 508 Greenwich St., at Spring St.)

RONA PONDICK—Recent sculptures. Through Sunday, May 22. (Fiction-Nonfiction, 155 Avenue B, at 10th St. Opens at noon on Saturdays and Sundays.)

RUSSELL SHARON—Life-size painted wood figures, some doing handstands. Through May 29. (Bromm, 170 Avenue A, at 11th St. Opens at 1 Wednesdays through Sundays.)

PAUL TEK—Paintings and drawings. Through June 5. (Mokotoff, 735 E. 9th St., just west of Avenue D. Opens at 1 Wednesdays through Sundays.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

MARGARET BOURKE-WHITE (1904-71)—Photographs taken for industrial clients and for *Fortune* and *Life*. Through June 4. (Photofind, 138 Spring St.)

RENÉ BURRI—A two-gallery show of photographs on subjects ranging from the space program to the Middle East. (Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. Through June 11. Opens at noon. . . . **SWISS INSTITUTE**, 35 W. 67th St. Through May 29. Mondays through Fridays, 2 to 8; Saturdays and Sundays, 2 to 6.)

NAN GOLDIN—Raw, candid photographs concerned with both the expression and the repression of sexual identity. Through June 17. (Pace-MacGill, 11 E. 57th St.)

GERALD INCANDELA—Photographs of figures by an artist who alters his prints with a brush as he develops them. Through May 28. (Kasmin, 580 Broadway.)

JOSEF KOUDELKA—Photographs, including prints of European Gypsies and country people and of the 1968 Prague uprising. Through July 10. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

HOPE SANDROW—Large-scale photographs in

which figures are often distorted. Through June 5. (Gracie Mansion Gallery, 167 Avenue A, at 10th St. Opens at 1 Wednesdays through Sundays.)

ROSALIND SOLOMON—Seventy-five large-scale works, collectively titled "Portraits in the Time of AIDS." Through July 1. (Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 33 Washington Pl. Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 to 6:30; Wednesdays, 10 to 8:30; Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays, 1 to 5.)

JAN STALLER—Recent photographs, often of piles of rock or refuse. Through May 28. (Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St. Opens at noon on Saturdays.)

GARRY WINOGRAND (1928-84)—The Museum of Modern Art has mounted a retrospective of his work; see below, under "Museums," for dates and times.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—Ninety paintings and drawings by Paul Klee, gifts to the museum from Heinz Berggruen. Through July 31. . . . **FIFTY-ONE DUTCH AND FLEMISH** paintings on loan from the Hermitage. Through June 5. . . . **A** show in which fifty American painters and sculptors born since 1945 are each represented by a single work. Through July 31. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Tuesday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—A retrospective of work by Garry Winogrand (1928-84), a photographer who sought out crowds and documented them, snapshot style, at press conferences, peace rallies, zoos, rodeos, and on city streets. Through Aug. 16. . . . **DRAWINGS** by Paul Cézanne taken from five sketchbooks that are on loan from the Kunstmuseum in Basel. Through June 5. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A large retrospective of Josef Albers' work includes paintings, objects, and photographs. Through May 29. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 11 to 7:45, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—Paintings and drawings from the past twelve years by Elizabeth Murray. Through June 26. . . . **DRAWINGS** by the contemporary artists George Condo, Mike Kelley, Ellen Phelan, and Janis Provisor. Through July 3. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—A show documenting the work of Gordon Matta-Clark (1943-78), who used abandoned buildings as sculptural material—cutting out arcs, circles, etc., and displaying leftover fragments in galleries. Through July 11. . . . **A** survey of Donald Sultan's paintings and drawings dating from 1981 to 1987. Through June 13. . . . **A** drawing and a sculpture each by forty contemporary Israeli artists, including Pinchas Cohen-Gan, Teresa Gejer, and Osvaldo Romberg. Through June 27. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

AMERICAN ACADEMY AND INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND LETTERS, Broadway at 155th St.—The annual exhibition of works by newly elected members (Cynthia Ozick, James Dickey, Raymond Carver, John McPhee, and others) and by recipients of Academy-Institute awards, among them David Bottoms, Andrew Hudgins, Miriam Gideon, Louise Talma, and Alex Katz. Manuscripts, paintings, drawings, sculptures, and photographs. Starts Thursday, May 19. (Open daily, except Mondays, 1 to 4.)

AMERICAN CRAFT MUSEUM, 40 W. 53rd St.—A show on the contemporary partnership between artists and architects, focussing on the artists' contributions. There are, for instance, stone seats by Scott Burton that are like those he made for the Equitable Center, and objects in glass by three artists who worked on the redesigned Rainbow Room. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10 to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

CLOISTERS, Fort Tyron Park—This institution, built with stones from seven medieval build-

ings, opened fifty years ago this month and, to commemorate the event, has refurbished the Cloisters Treasury with some late-twentieth-century accessories—climate-controlled cases, which hold the collections of ivories, metalwork, textiles, stained glass, manuscripts, and enamels. (Open daily, except Mondays, 9:30 to 5:15.)

COOPER-HEWITT MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—The Arts and Crafts Movement in America (1875-1920) is represented in a display of about two hundred objects, including stained glass, silver, books, furniture, jewelry, and textiles. Through June 26. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

JAPAN SOCIETY, 333 E. 47th St.—A display of works by two twentieth-century Japanese artists: Shiko Munakata, represented by, for instance, a series of hanging scrolls made of woodblock prints, and by an ink painting executed while he was on a visit to New York; and Kitaōji Rosanjin, whose ceramics based on traditional Japanese, Chinese, and Korean styles are on view. Through June 24. (Open Mondays through Fridays, 11 to 5.)

MORGAN LIBRARY, 29 E. 36th St.—A comprehensive exhibit of the work of Beatrix Potter (1866-1943) which includes watercolors of her familiar subjects (Peter Rabbit, Jemima Puddle-Duck) and her not so familiar subjects—insects, plants, and fossils. Through Aug. 21. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The Uffizi Gallery of Florence, repository of nearly thirteen hundred artists' self-portraits, has sent a selection of thirty—by Andrea del Sarto, Annibale Carracci, Walter Crane, and others—in an exchange show with the National Academy, which sent a selection of its thirteen hundred self-portraits to Florence this spring. Through July 31. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

THE NEW MUSEUM, 583 Broadway—A show by the Swiss artist Markus Raetz: a large torso in rough-hewn wood, part of a series of figures he calls MiMis; seemingly random arrangements of such materials as eucalyptus leaves and twigs which become familiar images when viewed in adjacent mirrors or glass; and other works. Through July 10. A complementary show is at Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St. (Open daily except Mondays and Tuesdays. Hours: Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—Some of New York's architectural history is recounted in a show that includes twelve views (in sketches, blueprints, and photographs) of Cass Gilbert's Woolworth Building and five photographs of the demolition of the El station at Sixth Avenue between Thirty-third and Thirty-fourth Streets. Through Aug. 21. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—The Berg Collection of English and American Literature is celebrating its jubilee with a show of a hundred and fifty of its prize manuscripts and books, among them a first edition of Poe's "Tamerlane and Other Poems," the notebooks of Eliot and Auden, one of Virginia Woolf's personal diaries, and the typescript of Robert Lowell's "The Drive from West Street to Danbury." (Open daily, except Sundays and Thursdays, 10 to 5:45.)

STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM, 144 W. 125th St.—A retrospective of paintings and prints by James Lesesne Wells. Through June 19. (Open daily except Mondays and Tuesdays. Hours: Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

MUSIC

OPERA

BRONX OPERA COMPANY—Performances of Mozart's "Abduction from the Seraglio," in English, staged by Cynthia Edwards. With the Bronx Opera Orchestra, conducted by Michael Spierman. (Hunter College Playhouse, Park Ave. at 68th St. Friday and Sat-

urday, May 20-21, at 8. For information about tickets, call 787-1356.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—Zubin Mehta conducting the final concerts of the regular season—Thursday, May 19, at 8; Friday, May 20, at 2; and Tuesday, May 24, at 7:30: Mahler's Ninth Symphony. . . . ¶ Monday, May 23, at 8: A Mozart-Schubert-Stravinsky program. . . . ¶ Wednesday, May 25, at 8, and Friday, May 27, at 2: Music by Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, Peter Mennin, and Richard Strauss. With Jeanne Baxtresser, flute. (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424.)

DETROIT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA—Gunther Herbig conducting a Schoenberg-Mozart-Beethoven program, with Emanuel Ax, piano. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Tuesday, May 17, at 8.)

"MEET THE MODERNS"—Lukas Foss, Tania León, and Steven Mercurio conducting the Brooklyn Philharmonic in a tribute to Leonard Bernstein. Also on the program are three world premières written in honor of Mr. Bernstein. With the Occasional Singers. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Tuesday, May 24, at 8.)

ATLANTA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND CHORUS—Robert Shaw conducting. Wednesday, May 25, at 8: An all-Brahms program, with Marietta Simpson, mezzo-soprano. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800.) . . . ¶ Thursday, May 26, at 8: A Stravinsky-Beethoven program, with Benita Valente, soprano; Janice Taylor, mezzo-soprano; Richard Leech, tenor; and William Stone, baritone. (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424.)

NEW YORK POPS—Skitch Henderson conducting. Friday, May 20, at 8: With Betty Comden and Adolph Green. . . . ¶ Tuesday, May 24, at 8: A benefit concert, with Liz Smith, Jackie Mason, Frank Gifford, and others. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800.)

DESSOFF CHOIRS—Amy Kaiser directing Mozart's Requiem and his "Vesperae de Dominica." With the Levin Baroque Ensemble and vocal soloists. (Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911. Wednesday, May 18, at 8.)

COLLEGIATE CHORALE—Robert Bass directing Verdi's "Four Sacred Pieces" and Janáček's "Amarus." With Curtis Rayam, tenor, and Karen Williams, soprano. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Saturday, May 21, at 8.)

"MISSA SOLEMNIS"—Lukas Foss conducting the American Symphony Orchestra and the combined choirs of several schools and choral societies in the Beethoven Mass. With vocal soloists. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Sunday, May 22, at 8.)

NEW CALLIOPE SINGERS—Peter Schubert directing contemporary works. (St. Paul's Chapel, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. Monday, May 23, at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Y CHORALE—Amy Kaiser directing. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-4410. Tuesday, May 24, at 8.)

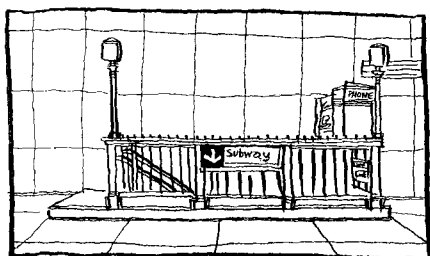
RECITALS

ALFRED BRENDL—Piano, in two all-Schubert concerts. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Monday, May 16, and Thursday, May 19, at 8.)

CHAMBER SOUND—With John Cerninaro, horn. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Thursday, May 19, at 8.)

MUSIC BY PETER SCHICKELE—With the composer playing the recorder and the piano, and other instrumentalists. (Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. Thursday, May 19, at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

KRONOS QUARTET—With Guy Kluevsek, accordion, and Terry Riley, synthesizer. (Alice



M.IAN

Tully Hall. 362-1911. Friday, May 20, at 8.)

JOSHUA PIERCE—Piano, playing John Cage's "Sonatas and Interludes for Prepared Piano," and other works. With assisting artists. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. Friday, May 20, at 8. For information about tickets, call 769-2514.)

NEW YORK CORNET & SACBUT ENSEMBLE—With assisting artists. (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. Saturday, May 21, at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

GAGEGO—A chamber group performing, among other works, the New York première of a Stuart Smith opera for speaking voice, "By Language Embellished: I." (Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 E. 71st St. Saturday, May 21, at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

ANA MARIA TRENCHI DE BOTTAZZI—Piano. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Sunday, May 22, at 2.)

KRYSTIAN ZIMERMAN—Piano, in a Chopin-Liszt program. (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424. Sunday, May 22, at 3.)

GERALD RANCK—Harpichord, with assisting artists. (New York Society for Ethical Culture, 2 W. 64th St. Sunday, May 22, at 3. No tickets necessary.)

CHRISTINE DIWYK—Piano. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Sunday, May 22, at 5:30.)

VLADIMIR FELTSMAN—Piano, playing the music of the Soviet composer Alfred Schnittke. With Dmitri Sitkovetsky and Alexandre Brailovsky, violin; Paul Neubauer, viola; and John Sharp, cello. (Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Sunday, May 22, at 7.)

THERÈSE DUSSAUT—Piano. (Weill Recital Hall. 247-7800. Monday, May 23, at 8.)

LIONEL ROGGE—Organ. (Church of St. John the Evangelist, First Ave. at 55th St. Monday, May 23, at 8. Admission by contribution.)

OBERLIN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC ENSEMBLE AND THE OBERLIN WIND ENSEMBLE—Larry Rachleff directing. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Wednesday, May 25, at 8.)

SPORTS

(The ticket-information number for Shea Stadium is 1-718 507-8499, and for Yankee Stadium 293-6000.)

BASEBALL—YANKEES at Yankee Stadium: Vs. Seattle, Monday through Wednesday, May 16-18, at 7:30. . . . ¶ Oakland, Friday and Saturday, May 20-21, at 7:30; and Sunday, May 22, at 1:30. . . . METS at Shea Stadium: Vs. San Francisco, Tuesday and Wednesday, May 24-25, at 7:35.

RACING—At BELMONT: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. . . . PIMLICO, Baltimore: The Preakness, Saturday, May 21.

ET ALIA

POETRY, PROSE, AND DRAMA READINGS—Amy Clampitt reading from her own poetry. (Dia Art Foundation, 155 Mercer St. Wednesday, May 18, at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ Ron Padgett and Ed Friedman reading from their own poetry. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Wednesday, May 18, at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ William Kennedy reading from his own prose. (West Side Y, 2 W. 64th St. 787-6557. Friday, May 20, at 8.) . . . ¶ Richard Howard and Alice Fulton reading from their own poetry. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 645-5848. Monday, May 23, at 8.) . . . ¶ Patricia Elliott, Beatrice Straight, Michael O'Keefe, and others in a benefit reading of Richard Wilbur's translation of "Phaedra," staged by Norman Rose. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Monday, May 23, at 8.)

DISCUSSION—David Henry Hwang talking about his plays, with Robert Oxniam. (Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. 517-2742. Tuesday, May 24, at 7.)

BROOKLYN BOTANIC GARDEN—The new conservatory opens on Thursday, May 19, and its central greenhouse will contain an exhibit representing the evolutionary trajectory of plant life, the first of its kind in the world. (Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5:30.)

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

EAST SIDE

PUBLIC THEATRE, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171; theatre opens in the late afternoon and is closed Mondays.)

Through May 19: (Separate admissions) "Quilombo" (1986; directed by Carlos Diegues; a Brazilian film, in Portuguese); "The Record" (1985; Daniel Helfer; in German), with Uwe Ochsenknecht; and "High Season" (†).

From May 20: (Separate admissions) "Tent of Miracles" (1977; Nelson Pereira dos Santos; a Brazilian film, in Portuguese); "The Record," and "High Season" (†).

MOVIELAND 8TH STREET TRIPLEX, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)

Theatre 1: Through May 24: "Beetlejuice" (†). From May 25: "Rambo III" (Peter Macdonald), with Sylvester Stallone and Richard Crenna.

Theatre 2: "Salsa" (Boaz Davidson).
Theatre 3: "Sticky Fingers" (Catlin Adams), with Helen Slater and Melanie Mayron.

GRAMERCY, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)

"Colors" (†).

BAY CINEMA, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Shakedown" (James Glickenhaus), with Peter Weller and Sam Elliott.

LOEWS 34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)

Theatre 1: Through May 19: "Moonstruck" (†). From May 20 (tentative): "Willow" (Ron Howard), with Val Kilmer.

Theatre 2: "The Unbearable Lightness of Being" (†).

Theatre 3: "Friday the 13th Part VII—The New Blood" (John Carl Buechler).

34TH ST. EAST, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)

Through May 19: "Lady in White" (Frank LaLoggia), with Lukas Haas.

From May 20: To be announced.

EASTSIDE CINEMA, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)

"Midnight Crossing" (Roger Holzberg), with Faye Dunaway and Daniel J. Travanti.

SUTTON, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)

Through May 19: "Shakedown" (James Glickenhaus), with Peter Weller and Sam Elliott.

From May 20: To be announced.

GOTHAM CINEMA, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)

Through May 24: "Wall Street" (Oliver Stone), with Michael Douglas, Charlie Sheen, Daryl Hannah, and Martin Sheen; and "Broadcast News" (†).

From May 25: Theatre temporarily closed.

PLAZA, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)

"The Moderns" (†).

MANHATTAN TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)

Theatre 1: Through May 24: "Moonstruck" (†). From May 25: "Crocodile Dundee II" (John Cornell), with Paul Hogan.

Theatre 2: Through May 24: "Beetlejuice" (†). From May 25: "Crocodile Dundee II."

D. W. GRIFFITH, 235 E. 59th. (759-4630)

"The Unbearable Lightness of Being" (†).

BARONET AND CORONET, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)

Theatre 1: Through May 19: "Above the Law" (Andrew Davis), with Steven Seagal.

From May 20: "Call Me" (Sollace Mitchell).

Theatre 2: Through May 19: "Lady in White" (Frank LaLoggia), with Lukas Haas.

From May 20: To be announced.

CINEMA I AND II, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022/0774)

Theatre 1: Through May 19: "The Light-horsemen" (Simon Wincer). From May 20: To be announced.

Theatre 2: "Salome's Last Dance" (Ken Russell).

GEMINI I AND 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)

Theatre 1: Through May 24: "Salsa" (Boaz Davidson). From May 25: "Rambo III" (Peter Macdonald), with Sylvester Stallone and Richard Crenna.

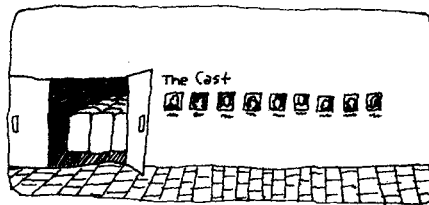
Theatre 2: "Stormy Monday" (†).

BECKMAN, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)

"The Milagro Beanfield War" (†).

LOEWS NEW YORK TWIN, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)

Theatre 1: "Colors" (†).



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22	23	24	25			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 14.

Theatre 2: "Friday the 13th Part VII—The New Blood" (John Carl Buechler).

68TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)

Through May 19: "Judgment in Berlin" (Leo Penn), with Martin Sheen.

From May 20: "Saturday Night at the Palace" (Robert Davies).

LOEWS TOWER EAST, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)

Through May 19: "The Last Emperor" (†).

From May 20 (tentative): "Willow" (Ron Howard), with Val Kilmer.

U. A. EAST, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)

"Salsa" (Boaz Davidson).

LOEWS ORPHEUM I AND 2, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)

Theatre 1: "Shakedown" (James Glickenhaus), with Peter Weller and Sam Elliott.

Theatre 2: "Friday the 13th Part VII—The New Blood" (John Carl Buechler).

86TH STREET EAST TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)

Theatre 1: Through May 19: "Midnight Crossing" (Roger Holzberg), with Faye Dunaway and Daniel J. Travanti.

From May 20: To be announced.

Theatre 2: Through May 19: "Maniac Cop" (William Lustig). From May 20: To be announced.

WEST SIDE

FILM FORUM I AND 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590; Mondays through Fridays, theatres open in the late afternoon.)

Theatre 1: Through May 17: "Mala Noche" (1985; directed by Gus Van Sant). From May 18: "Shattered Dreams: Picking Up the Pieces" (Victor Schonfeld and Jennifer Millstone; in English, Hebrew, and Arabic), a documentary.

Theatre 2: See listings under "Revival Houses."

BLEECKER ST. CINEMA I AND 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)

Theatre 1: "Tampopo" (†).

Theatre 2: "My Life as a Dog" (Lasse Hallström; in Swedish), with Anton Glanzelius.

WAVERLY I AND 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)

Theatre 1: "Hairspray" (†).

Theatre 2: Through May 19: "Love Is a Dog from Hell" (†). From May 20: To be announced.

8TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)

"The Last Emperor" (†).

ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)

Theatre 1: "The Milagro Beanfield War" (†).

Theatre 2: "White Mischief" (†).

QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)

Theatre 1: Through May 19: "Light Years" (René Laloux). From May 20: "Aria," ten episodes by ten directors.

Theatre 2: "Au Revoir les Enfants" ("Goodbye, Children") (†).

Theatre 3: "Mondo New York" (Harvey Keith).

Theatre 4: Through May 19: "Dark Habits" (†). From May 20 (tentative): "The Manchurian Candidate" (†).

23RD ST. WEST TRIPLEX, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)

Theatre 1: Through May 19: "Dominick and Eugene" (Robert M. Young), with Tom Hulce and Ray Liotta. From May 20: To be announced.

Theatre 2: Through May 19: "Midnight Crossing" (Roger Holzberg), with Faye Dunaway and Daniel J. Travanti. From May 20: To be announced.

Theatre 3: Through May 19: "Stand and Deliver" (†). From May 20: To be announced.

GUILD, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)

Through May 19: Theatre closed.

From May 20: "Willow" (Ron Howard), with Val Kilmer.

ZIEGFELD, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)

"Powaqqatsi" (Godfrey Reggio).

FESTIVAL, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)

"Au Revoir les Enfants" ("Goodbye, Children") (†).

57TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)

"The Last Emperor" (†).

CARNEGIE HALL CINEMA, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)

"White Mischief" (†).

CARNEGIE SCREENING ROOM, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)

"The Mass Is Ended" (Nanni Moretti; in Italian).

PARIS, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)

"Da" (Matt Clark), with Barnard Hughes, Martin Sheen, and William Hickey.

CINEMA 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)

Through May 19: "Biloxi Blues" (Mike Nichols), with Matthew Broderick.

From May 20: "I Don't Give a Damn" (Shmuel Imberman).

LOEWS PARAMOUNT, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)

Through May 19: "The Manchurian Candidate" (†).

From May 20 (tentative): "Willow" (Ron Howard), with Val Kilmer.

LINCOLN PLAZA I, 2, AND 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)

Theatre 1: "Bagdad Café" (†).

Theatre 2: "38: Vienna Before the Fall" (Wolfgang Glück; in German).

Theatre 3: "A Taxing Woman" (Juzo Itami; in Japanese), with Nobuko Miyamoto and Tsutomu Yamazaki.

CINEMA STUDIO I AND 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)

Theatre 1: "Babette's Feast" (†).

Theatre 2: "Wings of Desire" (Wim Wenders; in German, French, and English), with Bruno Ganz.

REGENCY, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)

Through May 19: "Light Years" (René Laloux).

From May 20: "Aria," ten episodes by ten directors.

EMBASSY 72ND ST. I AND 2, B'way at 72nd. (724-6745)

Theatre 1: "Someone to Love" (Henry Jaglom), with Orson Welles, Andrea Marcovicci, and Sally Kellerman.

Theatre 2: "Stormy Monday" (†).

LOEWS 84TH STREET SIXPLEX, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)

Theatre 1: "Bulletproof" (Steve Carver), with Gary Bussey.

Theatre 2: "Stand and Deliver" (†).

Theatre 3: "Friday the 13th Part VII—The New Blood" (John Carl Buechler).

Theatre 4: "Beetlejuice" (†).

Theatre 5: "Moonstruck" (†).

Theatre 6: "Colors" (†).

METRO CINEMA I AND 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)

Theatre 1: Through May 19: "The Milagro Beanfield War" (†). From May 20: To be announced.

Theatre 2: Through May 19: "The Last Emperor" (†). From May 20: To be announced.

COLUMBIA CINEMA, B'way at 103rd. (866-7500)

"Salsa" (Boaz Davidson).

OLYMPIA I AND II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)

Theatre 1: Through May 19: "Shakedown" (James Glickenhaus), with Peter Weller and Sam Elliott. From May 20: To be announced.

Theatre 2: Through May 19: "Lady in White" (Frank LaLoggia), with Lukas Haas. From May 20: To be announced.

TIMES SQUARE AREA**CRITERION CENTER**, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: "Beetlejuice" (†).

Theatre 2: "Bulletproof" (directed by Steve Carver), with Gary Busey.

Theatre 3: "Maniac Cop" (William Lustig).

Theatre 4: "Bloodsport" (Newt Arnold), with Jean Claude Van Damme.

Theatre 5: "Salsa" (Boaz Davidson).

Theatre 6: Through May 19: "The Seventh Sign" (Carl Schultz), with Demi Moore, Michael Biehn, and Jürgen Prochnow. From May 20: "Slaughterhouse Rock" (Dimitri Logothetis).

EMBASSY I, B'way at 46th. (757-2408)

"Colors" (†).

EMBASSY 2, 3, AND 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 2: "The Unbearable Lightness of Being" (†).

Theatre 3: "Riders of the Storm" (Maurice Phillips), with Dennis Hopper and Michael J. Pollard.

Theatre 4: "Dominick and Eugene" (Robert M. Young), with Tom Hulce and Ray Liotta.

LOEWS ASTOR PLAZA, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)

"Friday the 13th Part VII—The New Blood" (John Carl Buechler).

MOVIELAND, B'way at 47th. (757-8320)

Through May 19: "Shakedown" (James Glickenhaus), with Peter Weller and Sam Elliott.

From May 20: "White of the Eye" (Donald Cammell), with David Keith and Cathy Moriarty.

NATIONAL TWIN, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: Through May 19: "Above the Law" (Andrew Davis), with Steven Seagal. From May 20: To be announced.

Theatre 2: Through May 19: "Dead Heat" (Mark Goldblatt), with Treat Williams and Joe Piscopo. From May 20: To be announced.

WARNER, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)

Through May 19: "Midnight Crossing" (Roger Holzberg), with Faye Dunaway and Daniel J. Travanti.

From May 20: "World Gone Wild" (Lee H. Katzin), with Bruce Dern and Adam Ant.

REVIVAL HOUSES**BIOGRAPH CINEMA**, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)

May 16: "The Unforgiven" (1960; directed by John Huston), with Burt Lancaster, Audrey Hepburn, Audie Murphy, Charles Bickford, and Lillian Gish; and "The Furies" (1950; Anthony Mann), with Barbara Stanwyck, Wendell Corey, Walter Huston, and Judith Anderson.

May 17-18: "The Cardinal" (1963; Otto Preminger), with Tom Tryon, Romy Schneider, John Huston, and Carol Lynley.

May 19-21: "Rain" (1932; Lewis Milestone), with Joan Crawford, Walter Huston, William Gargan, and Beulah Bondi; and "Jezebel" (1938; William Wyler), with Bette Davis, Henry Fonda, George Brent, and Fay Bainter.

May 22-23: "Under the Volcano" (1984; John Huston), with Albert Finney, Jacqueline Bisset, and Anthony Andrews; and "Wise Blood" (1979; John Huston), with Brad Dourif, Ned Beatty, Harry Dean Stanton, and Amy Wright.

May 24-25: "Of Human Hearts" (1938; Clarence Brown), with James Stewart and Walter Huston; and "Mission to Moscow"

(1943; Michael Curtiz), with Walter Huston and Ann Harding.

CINEMA VILLAGE, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)

Through May 17: "Law of Desire" (1987; Pedro Almodóvar; in Spanish), with Carmen Maura, Eusebio Poncela, and Antonio Banderas; and "Le Trio Infernal" (1974; Francis Girod; in French), with Romy Schneider and Michel Piccoli.

May 18-19: "Open City" (1945; Roberto Rossellini; in Italian), with Anna Magnani; "Paisan" (1946; Roberto Rossellini; in English, French, Italian, and German), a six-episode film; and "Germany Year Zero" (1949; Roberto Rossellini; in German).

May 20-21: "King Lear" (1988; Jean-Luc Godard); and "Breathless" (1959; Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Jean Seberg and Jean-Paul Belmondo.

May 22: "Mon Oncle d'Amérique" (1980; Alain Resnais; in French), with Gérard Depardieu, Nicole Garcia, and Roger-Pierre; and "Last Year at Marienbad" (1961; Alain Resnais; in French), with Delphine Seyrig.

May 23-24: "The Mad Adventures of Rabbi Jacob" (1973; Gérard Oury; in French), with Louis de Funès; and "The Tall Blond Man with One Black Shoe" (1973; Yves Robert; in French), with Pierre Richard. From May 25: "The Tale of Ruby Rose" (1987; Roger Scholes); and "Walkabout" (1971; Nicolas Roeg).

FILM FORUM 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)

Through May 19: "The Insect Woman" (1963; Shohei Imamura; in Japanese).

May 20-22: "Intentions of Murder" (1964; Shohei Imamura; in Japanese).

May 23-24: "Eijanaika" (1982; Shohei Imamura; in Japanese); and "Karayuki-San: The Making of a Prostitute" (1975; Shohei Imamura; in Japanese).

May 25: "Pigs and Battleships" (1961; Shohei Imamura; in Japanese).

THALIA SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)

May 16: "Barry Lyndon" (1975; Stanley Kubrick), with Ryan O'Neal and Marisa Berenson.

May 17: "Big Trouble" (1986; John Cassavetes), with Peter Falk and Alan Arkin; and "Husbands" (1970; John Cassavetes), with Ben Gazzara, Peter Falk, and Cassavetes.

May 18: "Thunder Road" (1958; Arthur Ripley), with Robert Mitchum and Gene Barry; and "Blood on the Moon" (1948; Robert Wise), with Robert Mitchum, Barbara Bel Geddes, and Robert Preston.

May 19: "Strait-Jacket" (1964; William Castle), with Joan Crawford, Diane Baker, and Leif Erickson; and "It's a Small World" (1950; William Castle), with Paul Dale, Lorraine Miller, and Will Geer.

May 20-21: "Pauline at the Beach" (†); and "Summer" (1986; Eric Rohmer; in French), with Marie Rivière.

May 22: "The Damned" (†); and "Death in Venice" (1971; Luchino Visconti), with Dirk Bogarde and Bjorn Andresen.

May 23: "New York, New York" (1977; Martin Scorsese), with Liza Minnelli and Robert De Niro; and "Raging Bull" (1980; Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, and Joe Pesci.

May 24: "The Big Chill" (1983; Lawrence Kasdan), with Jeff Goldblum, William Hurt, Kevin Kline, Tom Berenger, Glenn Close, Mary Kay Place, JoBeth Williams, and Meg Tilly; and "Body Heat" (†).

May 25: "Where Danger Lives" (1950; John Farrow), with Robert Mitchum, Faith Domergue, Claude Rains, and Maureen O'Sullivan; and "My Forbidden Past" (1951; Robert Stevenson), with Robert Mitchum, Ava Gardner, and Melvyn Douglas.

THEATRE 80 ST. MARKS, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

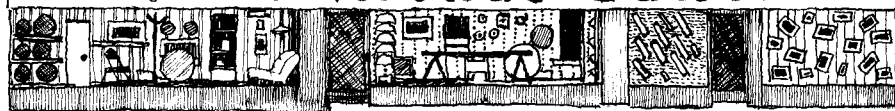
May 16: "Boudu Saved from Drowning"

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MEDITERRANEAN

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AT L'HOTEL MAXIM'S
FIFTH AVENUE & 55TH STREET

Third Avenue Bazaar

Street Leads

MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

- (1931; Jean Renoir; in French), with Michel Simon and Charles Grandval; and "The Lower Depths" (1936; Jean Renoir; in French), with Jean Gabin and Louis Jouvet.
- May 17: "The Scarlet Empress" (1934; Josef von Sternberg), with Marlene Dietrich, Sam Jaffe, and John Lodge; and "The Devil Is a Woman" (1935; Josef von Sternberg), with Marlene Dietrich, Lionel Atwill, and Cesar Romero.
- May 18: "Macbeth" (1948; Orson Welles), with Welles, Jeanette Nolan, Dan O'Herlihy, and Roddy McDowall; and "Oedipus the King" (1968; Philip Saville), with Christopher Plummer, Orson Welles, Lilli Palmer, and Richard Johnson.
- May 19: "Dangerous" (1936; Alfred E. Green), with Bette Davis, Franchot Tone, Alison Skipworth, John Eldredge, and Margaret Lindsay; and "Dancing Lady" (1933; Robert Z. Leonard), with Fred Astaire, Joan Crawford, Franchot Tone, and Clark Gable.
- May 20-21: "Last Tango in Paris" (1972; Bernardo Bertolucci; in French and English), with Marlon Brando and Maria Schneider; and "The Men" (1950; Fred Zinnemann), with Teresa Wright, Marlon Brando, Jack Webb, and Everett Sloan.
- May 22: "La Bête Humaine" (1938; Jean Renoir; in French), with Jean Gabin; and "La Grande Illusion" (1937; Jean Renoir; in French), with Erich von Stroheim, Jean Gabin, Pierre Fresnay, and Marcel Dalio.
- May 23: "Young and Innocent" ("The Girl Was Young"; 1937; Alfred Hitchcock), with Nova Pilbeam, Derrick de Marney, Basil Radford, Percy Marmont, and Mary Clare; and "Murder" (1930; Alfred Hitchcock), with Herbert Marshall and Norah Baring.
- May 24: "General della Rovere" (†); and "Open City" (1945; Roberto Rossellini; in Italian), with Anna Magnani.
- May 25: "Ecstasy" (1933; Gustav Machaty; in Czech), with Hedy Lamarr; and "Al-

giers" (1938; John Cromwell), with Hedy Lamarr and Charles Boyer.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490; a limited number of tickets are available to those applying for them in person at the museum after 11 on the day of the showing.)

THEATRE 11: Theatre closed.

THEATRE 2: May 17 at 1:30: "It Happened One Night" (1934; directed by Frank Capra), with Clark Gable, Claudette Colbert, and Walter Connolly. . . . May 17 at 4: "Lady for a Day" (1933; Frank Capra), with Warren William, May Robson, and Glenda Farrell. . . . May 17 at 6:30: "Dirigible" (1931; Frank Capra), with Jack Holt, Ralph Graves, and Fay Wray. . . . May 19 at 3 and 6:30: "Hoxsey: Quacks Who Cure Cancer?" (1987; Ken Ausubel), a documentary. . . . May 20 at 1:30: "Forbidden" (1932; Frank Capra), with Barbara Stanwyck, Adolphe Menjou, and Ralph Bellamy. . . . May 20 at 4: "Platinum Blonde" (1931; Frank Capra), with Loretta Young, Robert Williams, and Jean Harlow. . . . May 20 at 6:30: "It Happened One Night." . . . May 21 at 12:30: "Lady for a Day." . . . May 21 at 3: "Dirigible." . . . May 21 at 5:30: "American Madness" (1932; Frank Capra), with Walter Huston, Pat O'Brien, and Kay Johnson. . . . May 22 at 2:30: "That Certain Thing" (1928; Frank Capra; a silent film), with Viola Dana and Ralph Graves. . . . May 22 at 5:30: "So This Is Love" (1928; Frank Capra; a silent film), with Shirley Mason, William Collier, Jr., and Johnnie Walker. . . . May 23 at 3: "The Way of the Strong" (1928; Frank Capra; a silent film), with Mitchell Lewis and Alice Day. . . . May 23 at 6:30: A program of short films, 1982-87, by Paul Winkler, who will be present. . . . May 24 at 3: "So This Is Love." . . . May 24 at 6:30: "That Certain Thing."

WHITNEY MUSEUM, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—Through June 5, a program of sixteen films by Andy Warhol. The schedule

of performances is complicated; our best advice is to phone the museum for film and time schedules and ticket information. Closed Mondays.

JAPAN SOCIETY, 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015)—A program of comedy films. May 20 at 6:30 and 8:30: "Tora-San Goes North" (1987; Yoji Yamada; in Japanese, with English subtitles), with Kiyoshi Atsumi and Toshiro Mifune.

COLLECTIVE FOR LIVING CINEMA, 41 White St. (925-2111)—May 16 at 8: "Remember the Night" (1940; Mitchell Leisen), with Barbara Stanwyck and Fred MacMurray. . . . May 17 at 8: "La Femme Infidèle" (1968; Claude Chabrol; in French, with English subtitles), with Stéphane Audran and Maurice Ronet. . . . May 18 at 8: A program of four avant-garde films. . . . May 19 at 8: "Kat-zelmacher" (1969; Rainer Werner Fassbinder; in German, with English subtitles). . . . May 20 at 8: A program of films by Kembra Pfahler, who will be present. . . . May 21-22 at 8: Two different programs of films by young black British filmmakers. . . . May 23 at 8: "Clash by Night" (1952; Fritz Lang), with Barbara Stanwyck and Paul Douglas. . . . May 24 at 8: "Just Before Nightfall" (1971; Claude Chabrol; in French, with English subtitles). . . . May 25 at 8: A program of four avant-garde films.

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Lecture Hall, Eastern Parkway—May 21 at 2: "Do Not Enter: The Visa War Against Ideas" (1986; Robert Richter and Catherine Warnow), a documentary. The filmmakers will be present. (For information about tickets, call 1-718 638-5000, ext 233.)

RESISTANCE AND ESCAPE, 1933-45—The final programs in a free series of films and videos on resistance against the Nazi regime: May 17 at 6:30: "The Children of the 20th of July" (1986; Irmgard von zur Mühlen; in German, with synopsis available). . . . May 19 at 6:30: "Down with the Germans" (1984; Dietrich Schubert; in German, with synopsis available). (Goethe House, 1014 Fifth Ave., at 82nd St. 744-8310. Tickets are issued one hour prior to screening.)

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.

IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(Unsigned notes are by Pauline Kael; others are by Terrence Rafferty.)

AU REVOIR LES ENFANTS (GOODBYE, CHILDREN)—

It's set in Occupied France in 1944, when the writer-director Louis Malle was an eleven-year-old at a Catholic boys' boarding school near Fontainebleau that sheltered several Jewish boys. The Gestapo learned they were there, and sent the ones they found to Auschwitz, and the headmaster to a work camp. One of the Jewish boys was in Malle's class, but Malle didn't get to know him well and didn't realize that he was Jewish. For the dramatic purposes of the movie, he has conceived a close friendship between his alter ego, the fair-haired Julien Quentin (Gaspard Manesse), and the dark boy who is using the false name Jean Bonnet (Raphaël Fejtő). But nothing comes into clear focus—not the boys' attitudes, not even the images. The film (especially the first half) seems padded, formal, discreet. It's like watching a faded French classic. And there's something unseemly about the way Jean is used as an aesthetic object—spiritual, sensitive, exotic. With Francine Racette as Julien's mother and François Négret as the informer. In French. (Reviewed in our issue of 2/22/88.) (Quad Cinema, and Festival.)

BABETTE'S FEAST—In a village on Denmark's gray, blustery Jutland peninsula, sometime in the eighteen-eighties, Babette (Stéphane Audran), the French servant of a pair of elderly unmarried sisters (Birgitte Federspiel and Bodil Kjer), prepares a special dinner for her employers and their guests—a lavish, one-time-only orgy of haute cuisine served to a group of devout Lutherans who are used to receiving the Lord's bounty in the form of grim little slabs of boiled fish. Adapting one of Isak Dinesen's "Anecdotes of Destiny," Gabriel Axel, the writer-director, tells this simple tale simply. He establishes a lulling, bed-

time-story tone right from the start, perhaps too successfully: our eyelids begin to seem very heavy after twenty minutes or so. The whole thing turns out to be about the consolations of art, and the union of "righteousness and bliss." The film is more righteous than blissful: a more austere celebration of the pleasures of the senses would be difficult to imagine. In Danish and French.—T.R. (Cinema Studio.)

BAGDAD CAFÉ—After an argument with her husband on a godforsaken stretch of highway at the edge of the Mojave Desert, a fat German tourist named Jasmin (Marianne Sägebrecht) checks into a crummy motel attached to the equally crummy Bagdad Café. This movie, the first in English by the German director Percy Adlon (whose 1985 "Sugarbaby" was also a vehicle for Sägebrecht), is filled with eccentrics who are apparently meant to be lovable. The rather precious conceit of the film is that Jasmin somehow brings the outcast characters together in a kind of extended family; by the end, the Bagdad Café has been transformed into a popular roadside cabaret, with everyone contributing a specialty (Jasmin does magic tricks). The American performers are trapped in a movie that treats them as merely exotic—waxwork grotesques waiting to be animated by a mysterious German touch. Eleonore Adlon and Christopher Doherty collaborated with the director on the screenplay. With CCH Pounder, Jack Palance, and Christine Kaufmann. —T.R. (Lincoln Plaza.)

BEETLEJUICE—Set in an idyllic New England town, this farce about the afterlife is a variant on "Topper" (1937) and "The Old Dark House" (1932). A devoted, home-loving young couple (Alec Baldwin and Geena Davis) are drowned in a car accident, and when they return to their house as ghosts they are miffed by the redecorating of the New Yorkers who have bought it. Too mild to scare these intruders away, they call upon

the services of the ratty little demon Betelgeuse (pronounced Beetlejuice). Michael Keaton plays the part, and his uninhibited comic performance is like an exploding head. He isn't onscreen nearly enough—when he is, he shoots the film sky-high. The story is bland and the movie is slow to get going, but with crazy comedy you settle for the moments of inspiration, and this picture has them. The young director, Tim Burton, takes stabs into the irrational and the incongruous; the film's blandness is edged with near-genius (and some great special effects). The smudge-faced blond Catherine O'Hara, who's the possessor of the freakiest blue-eyed stare since early Gene Wilder, is brilliant as the madwoman who is the new lady of the house. (4/18/88) (Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center. . . . Movieland 8th Street Triplex, and Manhattan Twin; through May 24.)

BODY HEAT (1981)—Lawrence Kasdan wrote and directed this forties pastiche that verges on camp but takes itself straight. He has devised a style that is a catalogue of *noir* clichés—deco titles, flames and a heat wave, ceiling fans, tinkling wind chimes, old tunes, chicanery in muted voices, a weak man (William Hurt) and a femme fatale in white (Kathleen Turner), and insinuating, hotted-up dialogue that it would be fun to hoot at if only the hushed, sleepwalking manner of the film didn't make you cringe or yawn. He poses Turner as a hot number, and she proceeds to lure Hurt, who's a chump, to murder her rich husband (Richard Crenna). As Teddy, a professional arsonist, Mickey Rourke almost makes you feel that you're at a real movie. Cinematography by Richard H. Kline. (Thalia SoHo; May 24.)

BROADCAST NEWS—With William Hurt, Albert Brooks, and Holly Hunter; directed by James L. Brooks. (1/11/88) (Gotham Cinema; through May 24.)

COLORS—This muckraking melodrama about L.A.'s two most powerful confederations of

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

drug-trafficking youth gangs is deadened by standard cop-movie plays. The veteran cop (Robert Duval) and his new partner, the young fireball (Sean Penn) who likes to rough up suspects, are the only characters we get to know, and we already know them. The director, Dennis Hopper, and the cinematographer, Haskell Wexler, try for vividness, with the camera hightailing after the fast-moving gang members, and they catch images of the random violence of boys who are high on crack or PCP, and have arsenals of assault rifles and submachine guns. But despite the film's kinetic style it feels slow and long and tame. Hopper isn't inside the material, except for his identification with its nihilistic view that the cops' activities are purposeless and that life doesn't make any sense. He's a visual aesthete—less a director than an artistic arranger of people in the frame. With Maria Conchita Alonso, Trinidad Silva, and a cast that includes a dozen or so actual gang members. (5/2/88) (Gramercy, Loews New York Twin, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 1.)

THE DAMNED (1969)—Luchino Visconti's view of the depravity in the Third Reich—grandiose, lurid, sluggish. The Nazis are rotten, scheming degenerates; green lights play on their faces and they look like werewolves talking politics. The centerpiece is the orgy and massacre of Roehm's homosexual Brown Shirts, with gorgeous naked boys in black lace panties; he doesn't seem sure what attitude to take and he stages it immaculately, reverentially. Ingrid Thulin is the fag-hag mother, a Krupp-Borgia baroness who turns her son (Helmut Berger) into a dope-addicted transvestite. It's really the basic mother-son romance of homoerotic literature, dressed up in Nazi drag. With Dirk Bogarde, Helmut Griem, Charlotte Rampling, Florinda Bolkan, and Umberto Orsini. (Thalia SoHo; May 22.)

DARK HABITS (1983; "Entre Tineblas")—This amusingly erratic convent farce by the Spanish writer-director Pedro Almodóvar, who made the 1987 "Law of Desire," shows us his naughty-Catholic-schoolboy side. (Here, and in his later movies, he uses Catholic fetishism as camp.) Cristina S. Pascual plays Yolanda, a Madrid night-club singer, who hides out from the police in a convent that specializes in the salvation of murderesses, prostitutes, and junkies. The Mother Superior (Julieta Serrano) is so averse to recruit sinners that she'll shoot them up with heroin and supply anything else they want. (She's a junkie herself.) The jokes are sometimes labored; still, Almodóvar already had the disreputable sensuality that links him to early De Palma. And he catches something very appealing in the musical numbers, especially at the convent party where three singing nuns (including Carmen Maura, of "Law of Desire," on the bongos) serve as backup singers for Yolanda. Maura is a dadaist clown—which, of course, is what Almodóvar himself is; we're witnessing the director and his star finding each other. In Spanish. (5/16/88) (Quad Cinema; through May 19.)

GENERAL DELLA ROVERE (1959)—Vittorio De Sica has perhaps his greatest role in this otherwise mediocre film, directed by Roberto Rossellini. It is set in 1943. De Sica is a small-time swindler and the Germans induce him to impersonate a resistance general whom they have inadvertently shot, and send him to a political prison, where he is supposed to ferret out information for them. But the petty, self-loathing crook, experiencing for the first time the respect and admiration—even the awe—of other men, becomes as courageous as the man he impersonates. De Sica is superb; we watch his evolution from worm to Il Generale with utter astonishment and delight. But this film, made on a slender budget and shot and edited in six weeks, is—surprisingly—too long; the director and the writers seem not to have discovered their best material until it was too late to pull the story together. The faces are actorish; the sets are obviously sets. In Italian. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 24.)

HAIRSPRAY—The writer-director John Waters treats the message movie as a genre to be parodied, just like the teenpic. Combining the two, he comes up with a pop dadaist musical comedy, set in Baltimore in 1962. Waters loves narrative, and he has half a dozen plots crisscrossing each other. In the middle are

the spherical Mrs. Edna Turnblad (played by the male actor Divine) and her baby-blimp daughter, Tracy (Ricki Lake); they wear matching mother-and-daughter outfits. Tracy, who's the newest teen-age dancer on "The Corny Collins Show," discovers that black kids aren't allowed to take part and she becomes a leader in the fight for integration. Meanwhile, Divine watches over Tracy and preens like a mother hen. There's a what-the-hell quality to Divine's acting which the film needs; it would be too close to a real teenpic without it. When Divine's Edna Turnblad is onscreen in the sleeveless dresses she's partial to, the movie has something like the lunacy of a W. C. Fields in drag. With Ruth Brown, Debbie Harry, Sonny Bono, Jerry Stiller, Shawn Thompson, Ric Ocasek, Pia Zadora, Jo Ann Havrilla, and Waters himself as a sicko psychiatrist. (3/7/88) (Waverly.)

HIGH SEASON—Clare Peplow's first feature is a high comedy set on the Greek island of Rhodes, and it has some of the yumminess of a picture like "Shampoo." It's about the relations between expatriates, tourists, and natives, with Jacqueline Bisset giving a warm, juicy performance in the pivotal role of an English photographer who is broke and may have to sell her house and leave this island she loves. Irene Papas plays the English-woman's widowed friend—weather-beaten, deeply goofy, and as much a part of the magnificence of the island as the honking donkeys. These two women are both scenic wonders, and so is Sebastian Shaw, who plays an elderly art historian. Shaw—he was born in 1905—was a handsome leading man in British films of the thirties, and he's still handsome; his face opens to the sunlight and the camera. (The whole movie is superbly cast.) The script is by the director and her brother Mark; the meltingly beautiful cinematography is by Chris Menges. (4/4/88) (Public Theatre.)

THE LAST EMPEROR—Bernardo Bertolucci tells the story of Pu Yi, who was not quite three when, in 1908, he was set on the Dragon Throne in Peking's Forbidden City and became the titular ruler of a third of the people on earth. After being deposed and then enthroned again in Japanese-occupied Manchuria, he was in Soviet custody for five years, and then spent ten years being "reeducated" in a Chinese war-criminals prison. The movie doesn't have the juicy absurdity that seems to pour right out of the historical story. And it suppresses the drama. But it has pictorial grace and a dull fascination. Bertolucci presents Pu Yi (John Lone) as a man without will or backbone who lives his life as spectacle—who watches his life go by. And so we're given a historical pageant without a protagonist. There's an idea here, but it's a dippy idea—it results in a passive movie. With Joan Chen and Peter O'Toole. Cinematography by Vittorio Storaro; the film shows the palaces and courtyards of the two-hundred-and-fifty-acre Forbidden City. 2 hours and 46 minutes. (11/30/87) (8th St. Playhouse, and 57th St. Playhouse. . . .) Loews Tower East, and Metro Cinema; through May 19.)

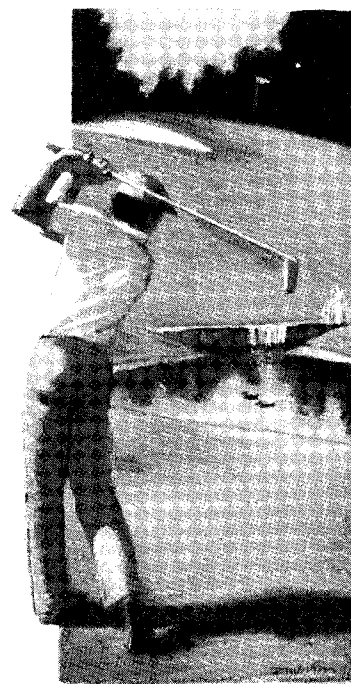
LOVE IS A DOG FROM HELL (European title "Crazy Love")—A low-keyed sexual reverie from Belgium about young Harry, who loves women but is rejected by them, and is able to show his tenderness only to a corpse. Adapted from Charles Bukowski's tales, principally "The Copulating Mermaid of Venice, California," this is a Flemish-language art film with its own erotic tone—faintly ironic, faintly queasy. Its softness gets to you. The thirty-one-year-old director, Dominique Derudere, made the final episode, which is set in 1976, as a half-hour short, and then (with his co-writer Marc Didden) worked up the two episodes of Harry's earlier life, set in 1955 and 1962, in order to make a feature—his first. The final necrophiliac section is too poetic—it's just a few tones away from being a parody of an adolescent fantasy. But the middle episode—Harry's high-school graduation dance and his torment over being covered with acne and boils and pustules—has a masochistic potency and some humor and rage. This is a movie for people with a perverse sense of humor or a persistent sexual acne. With Geert Hunaerts as Harry at twelve, and Josse De Pauw as Harry at nineteen (a bit like the young Alec Guinness) and at thirty-three (a bit like Nicol William-

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IN BRIEF—Cont'd

son). (5/2/88) (Waverly; through May 19.)
THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE (1962)—A daring, funny, and far-out thriller about political extremists. George Axelrod adapted the Richard Condon novel, and John Frankenheimer came to life as a director. This picture may be the most sophisticated political satire ever made in Hollywood. With Angela Lansbury, Frank Sinatra, Laurence Harvey, and James Gregory. (Loews Paramount; through May 19. . . . ¶ Quad Cinema; starting May 20, tentative.)

THE MILAGRO BEANFIELD WAR—The story is about a conflict over water rights in New Mexico between the struggling Mexican-American community and a bunch of powerful developers who are buying up land in the desert. Robert Redford's film of John Nichols' novel treats the material as an occasion for Capra-like populist comedy, and the feel-good, triumph-of-the-little-guy stuff overwhelms the jokes—the same thing often happened to Capra, who knew how to direct comedy, so it's not a surprise that it also happens to Redford, who doesn't. But he's assembled a lively, talented cast here, and their little bits of business keep the movie watchable. John Heard, Rubén Blades, Julie Carmen, James Gammon, Daniel Stern, and M. Emmet Walsh all seem to be having a good time, and Redford's direction is best when it simply relaxes and lets their vitality carry the movie. Also with Chick Vennera, Sonia Braga, Richard Bradford, Carlos Riquelme, and Christopher Walken. Adapted by Nichols and David Ward.—T.R. (Beekman, and Art Greenwich Twin. . . . ¶ Metro Cinema; through May 19.)

THE MODERNS—The big subject of Alan Rudolph's new movie, a comic reverie on Americans in Paris in the twenties, may have got the better of him: the tough-guy romanticism is ridiculous, the jokes are self-conscious and mostly dumb, and Rudolph's eccentric vision seems not so much audacious as merely adolescent. The few sequences that show the director at his best are ones without dialogue: a boxing match between the down-and-out artist-hero (Keith Carradine) and a rich, evil art collector (John Lone), and a lovely montage in which Carradine forges a Cézanne, a Modigliani, and a Matisse. Despite these moments, and despite Carradine's finely shaded performance, the movie feels phony. With Linda Fiorentino, badly miscast as an elegant siren desired by both Carradine and Lone, and Geraldine Chaplin, Geneviève Bujold, Wallace Shawn, and Kevin J. O'Connor, as a callow, aphorizing Hemingway. Script by Rudolph and Jon Bradshaw.—T.R. (Plaza.)

MOONSTRUCK—A rose-tinted black comedy, with its own special lushness. Cher is devastatingly funny and sinuous and beautiful as a widowed bookkeeper who lives with her Italian-American family in a big old brownstone in Brooklyn. When the bookkeeper and her fiancé's brother, a baker (Nicolas Cage), start lusting for one another, a fairy-tale full moon lights up the movie. And when you see that the whole cast of family members are involved in libidinal confusions the opera-buffa structure can make you feel close to deliriously happy. Cage is a wonderful romantic clown: he can look stupefied while he smolders. And the director, Norman Jewison, working from John Patrick Shanley's script, stylizes the ethnic performances given by the husky-voiced Olympia Dukakis, the great, leering Julie Bovasso, Vincent Gardenia, Danny Aiello, John Mahoney, and Anita Gillette. The picture is slender, but it's an original: its mockery is a giddy homage to our desire for grand passion. (1/25/88) (Loews 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Loews 34th Street Showplace; through May 19. . . . ¶ Manhattan Twin; through May 24.)

PAULINE AT THE BEACH (1982)—The writer-director Eric Rohmer serves up this innocuous sex roundelay with exquisite control. It's all low-key conversation, and there's a thin veneer of chic over everybody. Rohmer contrasts the belle of the beach, the voluptuous blond divorcée Marion (Arielle Dombasle), with her dark-eyed fifteen-year-old cousin Pauline (Amanda Langlet). The self-centered, self-deluding Marion flirts and bab-

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bles, while Pauline is quiet and intelligent. Rohmer has an amazing gift for finding (or creating) actors who embody the tiny, precise psychological observations that he wants to make, but he offers a tedious message ("A wagging tongue bites itself"), and he can't resist setting up the little girl as our moral instructor. (She and her adolescent lover, played by Simon de la Brosse, are so "natural" they go to bed together without a stab of fear or self-consciousness; does anybody believe this?) The six characters involved in the bedroom-farce misunderstandings include a suave fortyish stud (Féodor Atkine); a handsome young windsurfer (Pascal Greggory), who's a ninny; and a girl who sells candy on the beach (Rosette). In French. (Thalia SoHo; May 20-21.)

STAND AND DELIVER—Strictly speaking, this educational-inspiration story about a wizardly math teacher in a poor East L.A. high school isn't much of a movie: it's clumsily directed (by Ramon Menendez) and predictably virtuous (it's an American Playhouse production). Yet it's fairly enjoyable—painless, at least. The screenplay, by Menendez and Tom Musca, is based on the true story of Jaime Escalante (Edward James Olmos), who arrived at spirited Garfield High, which was on the brink of losing its accreditation, and managed to get his students excited about learning his subject—an entire class of these disadvantaged kids eventually took and passed the advanced-placement exam in calculus. Olmos, who's best known as the super-cool Lt. Castillo on "Miami Vice," does a spectacular turn. With thinning hair and a wardrobe of those grotesque shirts that scream "math teacher" to the world, he plays Escalante as a benign psycho, an impassioned nerd whose humor and energy are plausibly inspiring. Also with Lou Diamond Phillips, Rosana de Soto, and Andy Garcia.—T.R. (Loews 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ 23rd St. West Triplex; through May 19.)

STORMY MONDAY—This first feature by the British director Mike Figgis is the sort of thriller that's usually called "stylish"—perhaps because it doesn't have much substance. Roger Deakins' cinematography is heavy on *noir*-ish atmosphere—rain-slick streets, neon signs, gloomy bars—and Figgis, who also wrote the screenplay, has given his characters a familiar aura of low expectations and weary integrity. The setting is Newcastle, a seedy Northern industrial city, used here to evoke failure and wounded pride. Figgis isn't a bad director, but the movie never generates much excitement, even in its own academic, genre-exercise terms. It doesn't have a potent enough sense of *danger*: the hero and heroine (Sean Bean and Melanie Griffith) seem too young to have developed the properly resigned, don't-give-a-damn attitude, the self-destructive edge that really makes us fear for *noir* protagonists; and the villain (Tommy Lee Jones), though ruthless and mean, lacks the obsessive quality that would convince us that he'd track his enemies for the rest of their lives, for the sheer fun of exacting his revenge. Sting, of all people, gives the liveliest performance (as a harried night-club owner). Figgis composed the score: the soundtrack's highlights, though, are Otis Redding's "I've Been Loving You Too Long" and B.B. King's versions of the title song and "The Thrill Is Gone."—T.R. (Gemini, and Embassy 72nd St.)

TAMPOPO (1986)—Written and directed by Juzo

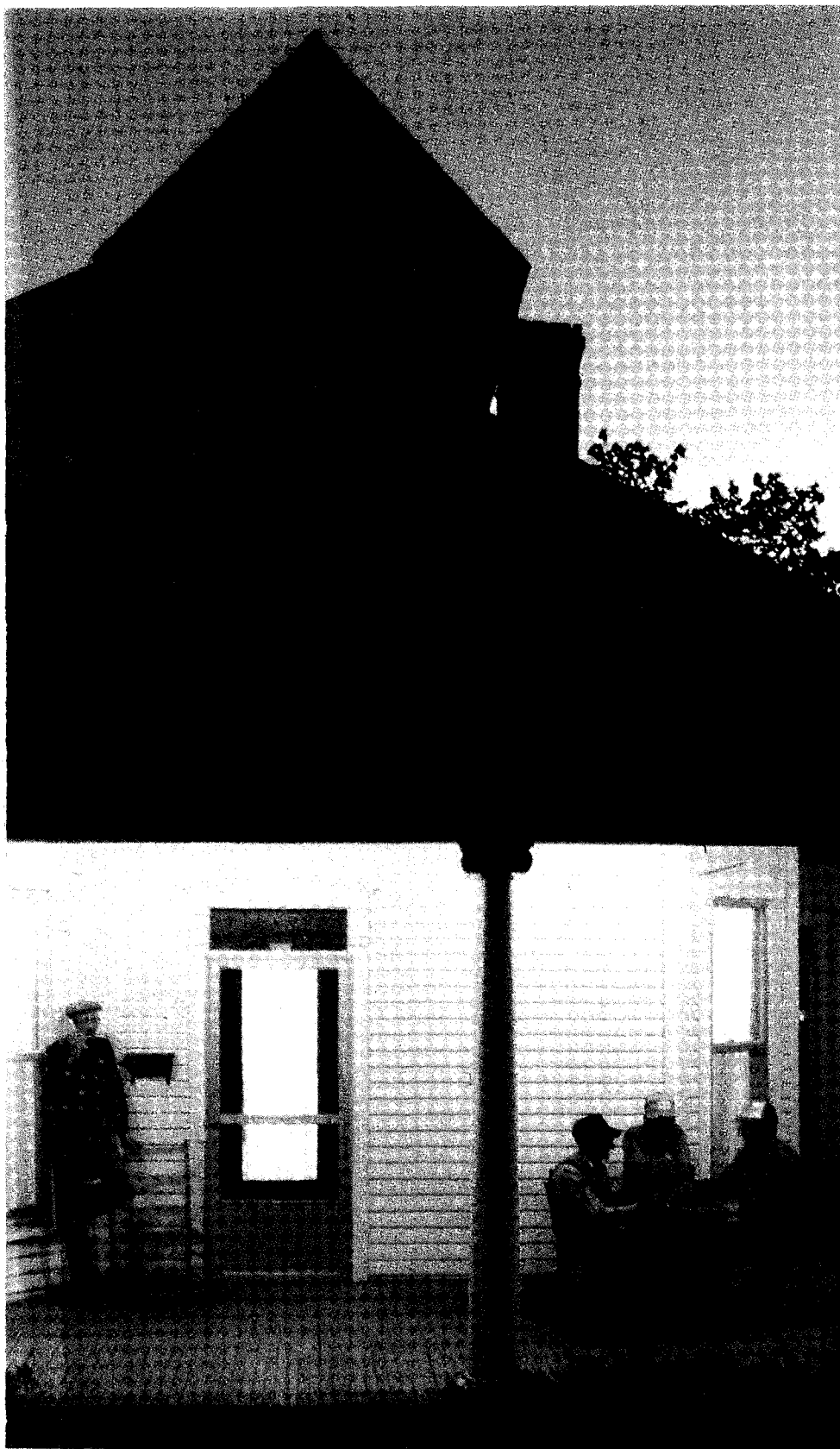
Itami, this understated farce has its own brand of dippy enchantment. It's about noodles, pleasure, and the movies. The title, which is Japanese for "dandelion," is the name of a fortyish widow (Nobuko Miyamoto) who is trying to make a go of a run-down noodle shop on the outskirts of Tokyo. A courtly truck driver (Tsutomu Yamazaki), who wears a dark-brown cowboy hat straight across his brow, like the righteous hero of a solemn Western, makes it his mission to help her become a real noodle cook. The film cross-cuts between the story of Tampopo and her cowboy samurai and the culinary-erotic adventures of a pair of lovers: a gangster in a white suit and his ready-for-everything cutie. These two demonstrate that eating and sex can be the same thing. The movie is constructed like a comic essay, with random frivolous touches, and much of it is shot in hot, bright color that suggests a neon fusion of urban night life and movie madness. The subtexts connect with viewers' funnybones at different times, and part of the fun of the movie is listening to the sudden eruptions of giggles—it's as if some kids were running around in the theatre tickling people. In Japanese. (6/1/87) (Bleecker St. Cinema.)

THE UNBEARABLE LIGHTNESS OF BEING—Directed by Philip Kaufman, this adaptation of Milan Kundera's novel is touching in sophisticated ways that you don't expect from an American director. A prankish sex comedy, it treats modern political events with a delicate—yet almost sly—sense of tragedy. It's the way the variations of jealousy and erotic attraction are played out by the three principal actors—an Englishman (Daniel Day-Lewis), a Swedish woman (Lena Olin), and a Frenchwoman (Juliette Binoche), all playing Czechs—that gives the movie its wonderfully unresolved texture. The story begins in Prague in 1968, during the period of freedom of expression and artistic flowering known as "socialism with a human face." Day-Lewis's Tomas is a hedonist, a womanizer, and an eminent young brain surgeon; Olin's Sabina, a painter who is his longtime sex partner, and Binoche's Tereza, whom he marries, represent the two poles of his life—lightness and weight. Kaufman has an exuberant temperament, and the spirit of the film is younger and looser than that of the book; a short two hours and fifty-three minutes, the picture has a whirling beauty. (2/8/88) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, D. W. Griffith, and Embassy.)

WHITE MISCHIEF—At first, Michael Radford's film about upper-class English settlers in Kenya in the nineteen-forties seems bracingly sardonic: there isn't a hint of the sneaky romanticism and nostalgia for Empire that colonial dramas so frequently succumb to. As one aristocratic viper after another is introduced, and each member of the large and familiar cast (Greta Scacchi, Charles Dance, Joss Ackland, Sarah Miles, John Hurt, Trevor Howard, Geraldine Chaplin) makes his distinctively peculiar entrance, the movie promises to be wicked fun. Amazingly, though, as the action gets nastier the picture gets duller. The screenplay, by Radford and Jonathan Gems, is based on the real-life murder of Josslyn Hay, Earl of Errol (Dance), a colonial Casanova who conducted a flagrant affair with young Lady Diana Broughton (Scacchi), to which their jaded social set reacted with a mixture of amusement and jealousy. As the movie concentrates more and more on the unsavory triangle of Errol, Diana, and her creepy middle-aged husband (Ackland), we begin to get the uneasy feeling that the director has lost track of his own intentions. For all the melodramatic complications, the characters remain static, as if they'd been frozen in place after their initial scenes: everything the filmmakers have to tell us about the English in Africa is in the first fifteen minutes. And Radford's skills as a director are purely compositional; the movie has no drive. He's too tasteful to be sensational, but a bit of vulgar energy would have made "White Mischief" a much better movie. (A 1982 book by the journalist James Fox provided the historical data, as well as a solution to what had been for over forty years an officially unsolved crime.)—T.R. (Art Greenwich Twin, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)



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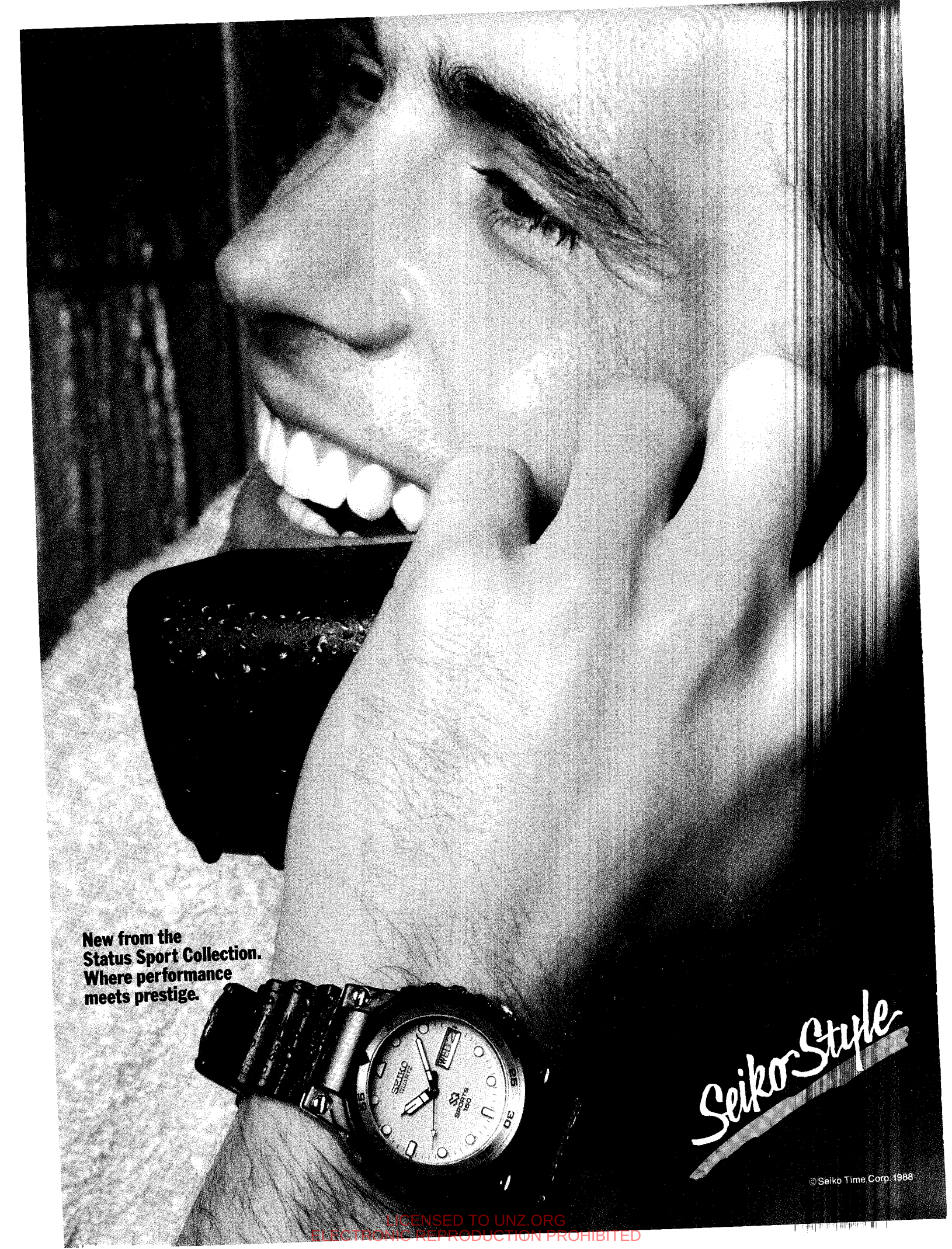
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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

WITH so much attention being paid to the race to succeed Ronald Reagan, it's sometimes easy to forget that he is still the President of this country, and that for the next eight months he will be making decisions of enormous importance to its future. On May 29th, he travels to Moscow to attend his fourth summit meeting with Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev. At their most recent meeting, in Washington last December, the two men signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces, or I.N.F., Treaty, which was intended to decrease the number of nuclear weapons in Europe. The main challenge, however, still lies ahead: substantially reducing the number of long-range nuclear weapons each side keeps aimed at the other.

Both Reagan and Gorbachev have repeatedly affirmed their desire for such an accord, but sharp differences over American plans to develop weapons in space have stymied progress. At the Reykjavik summit, in 1986, the two leaders apparently reached tentative agreement on a Gorbachev plan for achieving outright nuclear disarmament: the plan covered not just intercontinental missiles but all other categories of nuclear weapons as well, and called not merely for reducing the superpowers' nuclear arsenals but for eventually eliminating them altogether. But Reagan walked away from the deal at the last minute, because it also prohibited testing and deployment of space weapons for ten years. The President later explained to a group of schoolchildren that he was determined not to let the Soviets "scuttle our chances to develop technology that may someday protect you and your families from nuclear missiles."

With the so-called Strategic Defense

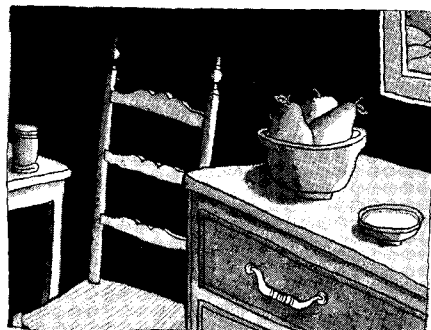
Initiative certain to be a central issue at the coming Moscow summit, three questions seem particularly urgent: Does the President remain opposed to any arms-reduction deal that would impose limitations on S.D.I.? Does he continue to believe that the United States may one day manage to deploy an impenetrable nuclear shield? And is he aware that virtually no one in his Administration shares his confidence—that even proponents of S.D.I. now envision a space-weapons system that would protect not people or cities or farmland but only missile sites?

Colin Powell, the President's national-security adviser, assured a gathering of S.D.I. supporters on May 4th that the Administration would refuse any arms-control deal with the Soviets that would, in effect, "cripple" S.D.I. "I have absolutely no confusion in my mind . . . about the President's commitment," Powell declared, meaning Reagan's commitment to building a comprehensive defense against Soviet missiles. Yet even the Joint Chiefs of Staff have said that they don't expect S.D.I. to be able to intercept more than thirty per cent of incoming Soviet missiles. And a two-year study completed last summer by the Office of Technology Assessment, a nonpartisan congressional research agency, concludes that "there would be a significant probability that the first

(and presumably only) time the ballistic missile defense system [was] used in a real war, it would suffer a catastrophic failure."

S.D.I. officials at the Pentagon have blocked the public release of the O.T.A. study. They did so originally on the ground that the report contained classified information, but after a copy of the report's summary chapter was leaked to the *Washington Post* a Defense Department spokesman said that the report simply required further study. Some of its conclusions were "unduly pessimistic," O'Dean P. Judd, the chief S.D.I. scientist, explained. In the meantime, S.D.I. officials sought to contain the damage by challenging the accuracy of the *Post's* story. A tart letter to the editor, initially drafted by S.D.I. officials, and signed by both James A. Abrahamson, the director of the President's Strategic Defense Initiative Organization, and John Gibbons, the director of the O.T.A., accused the paper of "misrepresentation." "Any statistician knows [that] 'significant probability' does not equate to likelihood," the letter said. The point is hardly a reassuring one. One expert involved with the study has explained, "Risk analysis involves multiplying the probability of a given event by the consequence of that event. In this case, the consequence is the world ending, so even a one-per-cent risk of system failure is certainly significant."

Despite the distressing implications of the O.T.A. report—and it is only the most recent in a stream of expert analyses, public and private, that have undermined President Reagan's promise that S.D.I. would render nuclear weapons "impotent"—Congress continues to lavish money on the program. On the day that Lieutenant General Powell affirmed Reagan's intransigence on S.D.I., the House voted, 223 to 195, to add three and a half billion



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dollars to the thirteen billion that the United States has spent on the program since 1983. As it happened, when the members took an initial vote on an amendment backed by liberal Democrats to reduce that amount to one and a third billion dollars, the electronic vote-tally machine suddenly went haywire. Churning and flashing at a fantastic clip, it eventually yielded a score of 358 to 237 in favor of the amendment—thus counting a hundred and sixty more members than actually exist. The snafu apparently changed few minds about the reliability of technology, however: when the roll was called, the measure was resoundingly defeated.

President Eisenhower, in his famous farewell address, warned against the power of what he called the military-industrial complex to twist the nation's political system to its own purposes. That S.D.I. can continue to lumber forward in the face of abundant and still growing evidence that it is a boondoggle of the most perilous and expensive sort is eloquent testimony to Eisenhower's prescience. For most members of Congress, support for S.D.I. has far more to do with loyalty to corporate contractors and concern about constituents' jobs than with ideology or strategic doctrine. That S.D.I. may be allowed to prevent an arms-control breakthrough with the Soviet Union is depressing enough in itself, but it also suggests that real arms reduction may be impossible without wholesale domestic reforms on the part of both superpowers—that is, without conscious efforts to shift from war economies to peace economies.

In the meantime, perhaps we would think more clearly about these issues if we began calling things by their correct names. President Reagan and his supporters complain about the media's use of the term *Star Wars* as a shorthand reference to the space-weapons program. But the term *Strategic Defense Initiative* is not accurate, either, for S.D.I. is not really a defensive system. Not only is it incapable of providing a foolproof defense against a doomsday attack; its true military value lies in its offensive capability. What makes S.D.I. so dangerous and destabilizing—and why it agitates the Soviets so—is its potential for enhancing the United States' ability to launch a surprise first strike. It may well be that President Reagan does not comprehend

this reality about space weapons, but it is not too late for him to be educated. Unfortunately, Congress and the press seem content to indulge his cheerful ignorance, as they have so often done in the past. The same journalists and lawmakers who are taking such pleasure now in smirking at Mrs. Reagan's dependence on astrological guidance have studiously refrained from raising questions about her husband's embrace of a superstition that is far more dangerous: his belief in a perfect defense against nuclear attack.

Crossings

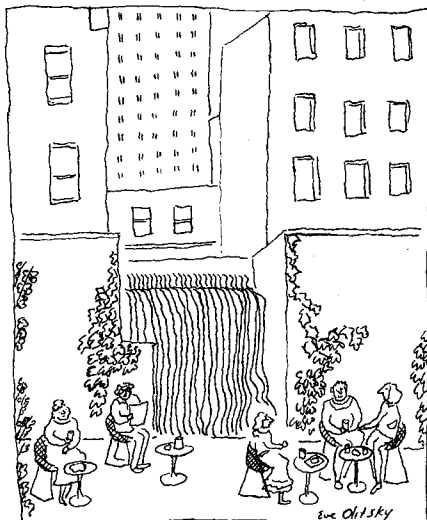
ON a bright, windy early-May day, we took rides on a brand-new Australian-designed catamaran, on a temporary new branch of the Staten Island ferry, and on a resuscitated crew boat, and we also walked across the Williamsburg Bridge. (It still carries pedestrians and bicyclists.) We came away, unexpectedly, with a strong sense of existing simultaneously in the past, the present, and the future.

More than a dozen crew boats—low-slung, powerful boats that were built in quantity in the early eighties to ferry workers out to offshore oil rigs in the Gulf of Mexico and were abruptly abandoned a few years later, when the oil industry went bust—have been bought up by local ferryboat operators, who in the last two years have established eleven new routes: to Brooklyn, to Queens, and to New Jersey. The crew boat that we rode, the *Texas Eagle*, runs between Pier 11, on the East River, and Bay Ridge and the Rockaways, and belongs to an outfit called *Manhattan Express*, which bills

itself as "The Only Brooklyn Based Ferry Service." *Manhattan Express* was started by Joseph Huckemeyer, from Sheepshead Bay, and Michael Danon, from Freeport, two friends whose families are in the party-boat business—taking groups of people out into the Atlantic for a day of deep-sea fishing—and the *Texas Eagle* shows a certain party-boat influence: a we-can-handle-it and thank-God-you-can-still-make-a-living-on-the-water attitude. The aft rail has been patched with a piece of plywood; down in the front cabin, there's a pot of coffee for passengers; and everything is spotlessly clean. The boat is about a hundred feet long, it has a noisy diesel engine that can run at twenty-four miles an hour, and the main deck is close to the water. Hanging on to a piece of steel tubing that holds up a blue canvas awning, you get a slightly bouncy, skipping-around, adventuresome feeling.

The Bay Ridge-Manhattan trip takes fifteen minutes, as opposed to about an hour on the B, the R, or the N train—some of the sorriest and most dilapidated runs in the entire subway system. "We've actually had one passenger tell us that our boat saved his marriage and his career," said Captain Philip Spadaro, Joey Huckemeyer's brother-in-law, whose hazel eyes have taken on a slight squint after years of looking through light reflected from the water. "People get on our boats with no aggravation, and they get off with no aggravation—they get to work with no hassle. While everyone else is walking in all stressed, they walk in super-duper happy."

The ride on the new three-deck catamaran, which can move through the water at about thirty-four miles an hour, is very different. It's more like a slow elevator trip combined with watching a travelogue on one of those extra-wide, extra-tall movie screens: you're high up off the water, you see a lot of movement on all sides, but you feel little or no motion. That's the point, according to Philip Hercus, the designer. "I designed the boats to stay in the water," he says. Catamarans have twin hulls, which make for stability, and Hercus's cats, which are now being used in fifteen countries, are lightweight and have an all-aluminum superstructure completely separated from the hull by four inches of rubber blocks, and so even when the boat accelerates from zero to over twenty



miles an hour in under ten seconds you hardly feel it moving. This is especially disconcerting on the second deck, where you can stand right behind the master of the boat, separated from him only by a glass panel, while the two of you look ahead at rapidly approaching landmarks through tilted wraparound windows. You feel a little the way you might feel if you were standing in the forehead of the Statue of Liberty and she suddenly took the notion to whoosh north up the East River. Hercus now considers thirty-four miles an hour old hat and is working on a new generation of cats, which can go up to forty-six. In the meantime, a sister cat of the one we were on will begin commuter runs between Manhattan and northern New Jersey, near Sandy Hook, next spring. And seven more cats may form part of a new trans-Hudson fleet being assembled for restoration of Manhattan-to-Hoboken ferry service by 1990.

The boats on the new East River service of the Staten Island ferry are spacious, rumbling, fast-loading, twenty-mile-an-hour, deep-horned orange-and-blue workhorses—standard mass-transit boats that somehow, despite an ungainly look and spartan furnishings (a snack bar on a trestle table, fluorescent lights), are instantly lovable objects. (A lovable object, according to Ronald Lee Fleming, a Cambridge, Massachusetts, planner, is a part of your surroundings which you want to take care of and which at the same time you feel is taking care of you—it's been put there for your benefit.) After the Williamsburg Bridge was shut down last month, hundreds of workers from the Department of Transportation worked around the clock one weekend to launch this ferry service—the first regularly scheduled runs to Williamsburgh in more than fifty years. They had to build a dock, pave a street, paint signs, put up an orange-and-blue tent for a waiting room, and install electric lights in it, and so there's an air of subdued heroism among the crews of these ferries. Ferry officials say that fathers of Chassidic families in Williamsburgh have started knocking off work an hour early on Friday so that they can get home, collect the kids, and still have time to take the whole family on a ferry excursion before the Sabbath begins.

Finally, the walk across the Williamsburg Bridge. During the evening



"Too Tom Wolfeish!"

rush hour these days, particularly if the weather is good and the sunset handsome, there's a constant presence of pedestrians and bicycle riders on the bridge. A number of people who would normally take the J or the M train across the bridge to Brooklyn after work have started walking home. To be on a giant steel suspension bridge, a hundred and forty feet above the river, that is devoted entirely to walkers and bikers gives you an extraordinary sensation. You feel the wind moving up the river from the harbor, and you can smell spring and salt. What's unexpected is that your sense of hearing is restored—and you hear things not only all around you but beneath you as well. A tug chugs upriver and hums as it passes underneath the bridge. Then

you hear, faintly, a cheering sound: half a mile away, two uniformed teams are playing softball under the lights on a diamond in East River Park, in Manhattan, all the way back at the foot of the bridge. You stop and turn around and look: the bases are loaded, and someone has just stroked a clean single and is digging hard, legs pumping, stretching it into a double.

Buttons

DIANA EPSTEIN recently bought seventeen thousand buttons, sight unseen, from the city of Tempe, Arizona, and the other day she invited us over to watch as she opened boxes, suitcases, and an entire trunk full of the buttons to find out what she now

owned. Ms. Epstein is in the business of buying buttons—she is the founder of Tender Buttons, on East Sixty-second Street, which is the only buttons-only store in America—and she has travelled far and wide to find stock for the shop. In the past, she and her partner, Millicent Safro, have tracked down buttons in Egypt, Russia, Finland, and Italy; in a château outside Paris; in a Quonset hut outside London; in a cave in Brussels; in a campground in Massachusetts; and in a little town near a beefalo ranch in West Virginia. But the lot from Tempe is the first pig in a poke she has ever bought. “I have a feeling these buttons will be either very appealing or very awful,” she told us soon after we arrived at her shop. “I’m a little nervous, because I paid thirty-six hundred dollars for the buttons and right after I won the auction I got a letter from a woman in Arizona saying that the collection was nothing but rusty old buttons. All I knew when I put in my bid was that a wealthy woman in Tempe had willed her button collection to a museum in

town, and the museum had given it to the city to auction. I couldn’t go to Tempe to see the buttons, but I had my mind set on getting them. Now I’m about to see whether my intuition was brilliant or demented.”

Ms. Epstein, an exuberant woman with round shoulders and short silvery hair, led us upstairs to her office. It was full of buttons—in bowls, boxes, drawers, crates, and bags. Before we broke into the shipment from Tempe, Ms. Epstein showed us some of her old favorites: Eskimo buttons of ivory in the shape of seals and walruses; Victorian glove buttons with tiny daguerreotype portraits of babies; large, yellowish nineteen-forties buttons made of Lucite salvaged from Second World War bombers; and one big brass button with the famous Currier & Ives’ print of skaters in Central Park stamped on it, which, she told us, is considered the rarest picture button in the world. Then she said, “Here are my real pets,” and handed us little Bakelite buttons in the shape of hearts and matchsticks. “I always liked buttons, and I

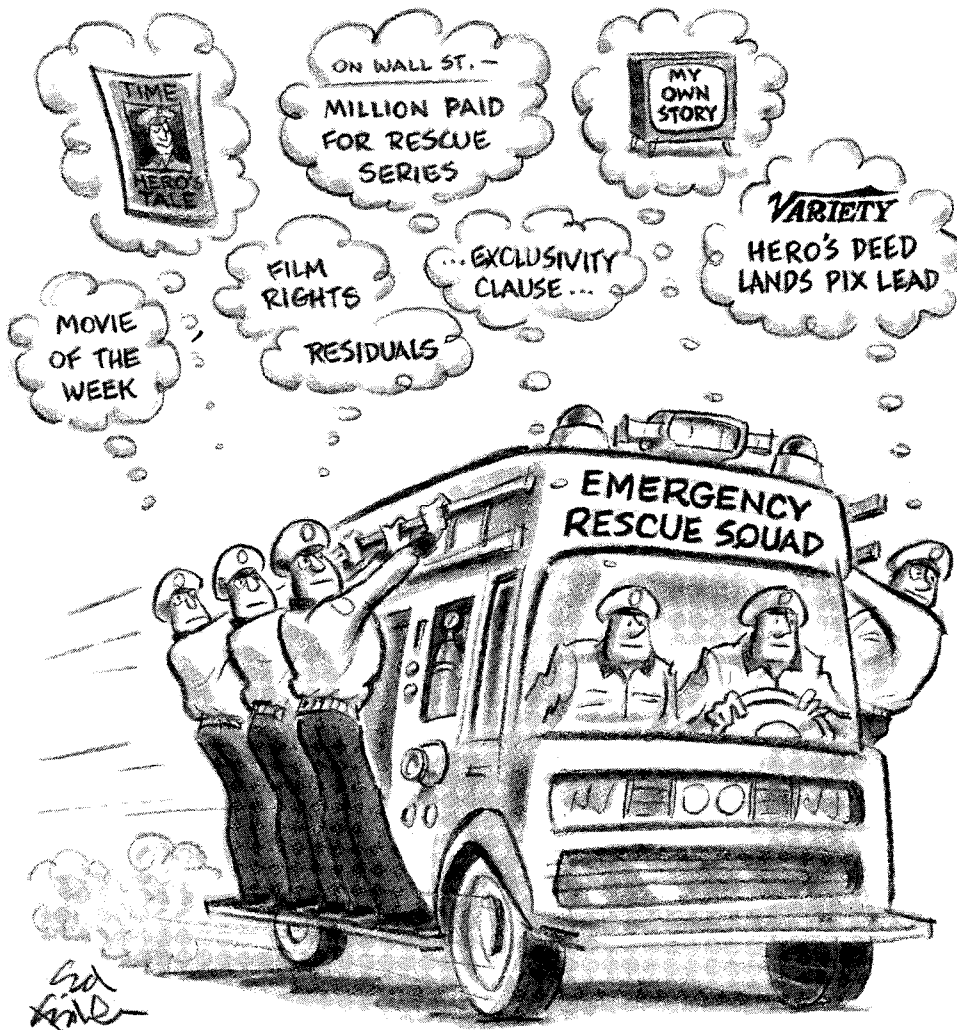
always liked the word ‘buttons,’ but I never intended to get into the button business. I was in publishing. At lunch, I used to go to a funny old button store on the East Side, where I’d get good four-hole buttons for my clothes. One day, I heard that the owner had died and the contents of the store were for sale. I thought it would be great to go through all those buttons. That’s all I really wanted to do—just go through the buttons. So I bought the contents, and when I went to collect them I realized that there were so many buttons that I’d have to rent the store just to go through them. So, suddenly, I had a button store.” She cottoned to the button business right away, she said. “It was the middle of the sixties, and I was interested in the nature of performance and art, and all that,” she went on. “I liked the philosophical notion of focussing on something so small when everything else was so big. Paintings were big. Buildings were big. It appealed to me that buttons were thought of as useless, everyday objects. I liked the found-art nature of it.”

The store manager, Zachary Stewart, came upstairs and said, “Diana, I know this is highly unlikely, but I have a guy on the phone who wants to know if we have any hand-painted ivory buttons of faces.”

“We do, we *do*,” Ms. Epstein said. “I couldn’t resist—I stuck my hand in one of the suitcases yesterday and guess what I pulled out.” She handed him a crumbly blue cardboard box that said “VITAMINS PLUS” on the outside. Inside were six Oriental heads, each wearing a different expression and a different ornate hat. Mr. Stewart shook his head in amazement.

Now Ms. Epstein decided that it was time to dig into the rest of the collection, and she threaded her way between boxes and crates to a corner of the room where a small steamer trunk, two ratty-looking suitcases, and two crumpled cartons were stacked. She rubbed her hands together and then dragged out one of the suitcases and opened it.

“Oh, this is nice!” she said, spreading out a red cloth on which dozens of black glass buttons were sewn. “I should send this to Diana Vreeland. The woman who owned these must have been a real old-time collector.” She turned back to the suitcase and



started passing buttons to us. "Here's a display card of good carved pearl buttons. I'd say they're from 1880. And this is a display card, very nice, of picture buttons of birds." She rummaged through some more display cards, mumbling, "Oh, here are some bug buttons. Oh, more birds," and then stood up and said, "The cards are too easy. Let's look at a bag."

Ms. Epstein reached into the suitcase, took out a dusty plastic bag full of buttons, and sat down at a table, so she could spill them out and pan them. As she was cutting open the bag, she said, "You know, I still wear only plain four-hole buttons. I think it would be a bit ostentatious of me to wear something more spectacular. Of course, I never, ever wear zippers. I don't believe in them. I don't like the sound or the act of zipping. And I won't even say the word 'Velcro' if I can help it."

While she was talking, she was sifting through the pile of buttons. Now she said, "Here's a picture button. Oh, my! This is a very rare button. It's a picture of a rabbit meeting a frog. Oh, my gosh, here's *another* one! Maybe there's a set. This collector had good taste." She held up a small brass button and said, "This is an overalls button. It says 'Stronghold Steve' on it. I love work-clothes buttons. They used to have wonderful, poetic sayings on them. It was as if they were a bit of an escape dream for the working class. Here's a big tin button. That's good for me—I sell my huge buttons to Prince for cufflinks. Some of these are a little rusty. We'll have to soak them in Pepsi. Oh, I think this is going to be a fantastic bunch of buttons."

Mr. Stewart came upstairs again and said, "Diana, I've got a guy on the phone who would like to sell you three hundred military buttons."

"That's about two hundred and ninety too many," Ms. Epstein replied. "Tell him no. Oh, *look!*" She slapped her forehead. "This is one of the rarest black glass buttons in the world!" She handed us something small and shiny with a scene of two people on a toboggan molded into it. "A button collector might pay fifty dollars or more for that. That's incredible. Let's open another bag." She swept the buttons on the table into a box and took another dusty bag out of the suitcase.

"This one isn't full of glamorous buttons," she said after scanning the



"The first thing about living alone again is not to overdo the chintz."

pile. "These are very old buttons that are interesting for historical reasons—for the way they're made. A lot of them are men's trouser buttons. You can see the whole history of men's fashions through trouser buttons alone."

She picked out a small tin button and said softly, "This is what I love about buttons. Each one is like a tiny, evocative event." She held up the button, which had a bit of green thread still wrapped tightly in its sewing holes. "A Boy Scout button, maybe fifty years old," she said. "I wonder where this Scout is now."

Winning Colors

A YOUNG woman we know writes:

The Monday before the Kentucky Derby, I saw a *Times* article about the filly Winning Colors, and I knew right away that she was a winner. I knew it

positively, as though I were psychic, and the day before the race I decided to make a pilgrimage, with my friend Susan, to the Off-Track Betting place on Forty-second between Madison and Park and lay some cash on my hunch.

On our way, we stopped at a salad bar on Fifth Avenue, picked up a couple of Buds in cans, and carried them along in paper bags to get us in the mood. We discussed possible betting strategies at length, and with some anxiety. Should we put all our money on one horse to win? What about this placing and showing business? Do we go for a long shot, like Jim's Orbit or Granacus? How much do the jockeys have to do with all this? Should we account for the fact that Kingpost's trainer is a former beauty queen?

When we arrived at OTB, we noticed right off that none of the regulars were drinking beers from paper bags, though most of them looked as if they'd



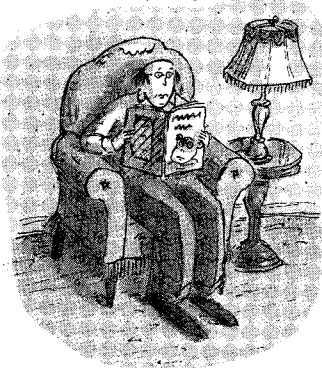
FROM THE PEOPLE WHO BROUGHT YOU
I-CAN'T-BELIEVE-IT'S-NOT-A-PETROLEUM-
BY-PRODUCT® SANDWICH SPREAD



I-CAN'T-BELIEVE-THEY'RE-
NOT-CARDBOARD®
FOOTWEAR



I-CAN'T-BELIEVE-IT-
WASN'T-WRITTEN-BY-
A-CHIMP®
NOVELS



I-CAN'T-BELIEVE-
THIS-ISN'T-A-WALKUP-
RAILROAD-FLAT HOVEL®
LUXURY REAL ESTATE



a. Chert

just finished a couple or else couldn't wait to pop one open. We wandered around the smoky room for a while, feeling the way you feel in a foreign train station: lost amid unintelligible chatter, amplified announcements, incomprehensible human excitement and sadness, and purposeful moving about, you, the stranger, wonder how to find the right platform—or, in this case, betting programs and betting slips.

I asked an old man in a madras hat if he could help us. "I swear, I haven't been here in six months," he said. "Not in six months." We moved along and, on a counter, finally found the correct slips of paper and a couple of stubby pencils, like the ones you get at miniature-golf courses, but as we put pencil to paper we realized our monumental naïveté. We *could* simply pick a horse to win, place, or show, but there was a world of more exotic possibilities as well. We could bet a Quinella, for example, or an Exacta—

words that suggested synthetic furs or pharmaceutical products more than betting options. A mustachioed man, a young Omar Sharif, impatiently but kindly explained all the options to us, and I finally bet six dollars on a Triple Box (three horses—in my case, Winning Colors, Private Terms, and Brian's Time—in any order) and, in a separate bet, put two dollars on Granacus (why not?) to show. As an afterthought, perhaps guided by the sure instinct of my hunch, I put four dollars on an Exacta: Winning Colors to win, Forty Niner to place. Bill Finley, of the *News*, liked Forty Niner, and I thought that this ticket—my emotional instinct combined with his authority—might have balance. I silently thanked the cashier for taking my money without comment.

Susan made a more flamboyant bet—twenty-four dollars on the exact order of the first three horses—and her cashier, who wore a plastic rose in his cap,

laughed out loud. "What's this?" he asked. "You got a boyfriend that's a trainer, or something?"

We hung out at OTB a while longer, and courteously directed newcomers toward the betting slips and stubby pencils. We watched a homeless man leave, disgruntled, with his sleeping bag over his shoulder, when the Aqueduct races ended. "Who do you like for the Derby?" a doe-eyed woman with bleached hair and a pink V-neck sweater asked me. I said "Winning Colors," with some swagger, and she said "Oh? Did you follow the dosage charts?" I admitted I'd never heard of a dosage chart, and, humiliated, skulked out of OTB, my twelve dollars presumably lost forever. Susan and I walked home in the rain, drinking our beers as we went. The bags got soggy and we had to throw them away.

The Derby itself was even more confusing than our trip to OTB. The sports bar where we watched it was not serving mint juleps, so Susan ordered bourbon and water

and crème de menthe, and I ordered a gin-and- tonic. The race started suddenly. The cheering in the place made the track announcer inaudible, and to me one horse was indistinguishable from the next, but, in the spirit of the occasion, I jumped up and down, clung fast to my OTB tickets, and spilled gin-and- tonic on my shoes. When it was over, I had to ask a bespectacled man hoarding his OTB tickets in a neat little pile who had won, and when he said "Winning Colors" I yelled madly. Only after a while did I remember my Exacta, so I asked him who came in second, and he said "Forty Niner." Just then the Exacta payoff flashed on the screen: "\$66.20." I yelped and threw my hat in the air. High fives and shoulder slaps from everyone. I grinned all night long, and whenever I checked my wallet to make sure the ticket was still there, I thought, Boy, that was easy. I bet I could do it again.

WHEN HE REEMERGES

A QUIZ: You've got a terrible cold. Riding home on the bus, you feel a sneeze coming on. As you reach for a Kleenex, you notice that sitting across from you is Richard M. Nixon, the only American President ever to resign from office. Do you still cover your mouth?

At a dinner party you're startled to find him on your right. He says, "Pass the Triscuits, please." What do you do? Remember: the entrée will be veal with a wonderful Sauternes sauce. Seated to your left is supermodel Elle MacPherson; Mel Gibson is across from you. They both find you wildly appealing. Stay or go?

He appears on "Sesame Street" to teach kids conflict resolution. He suggests: if you disagree with a playmate get tough; threaten to set him on fire. Would you continue to watch "Live from Lincoln Center" on that same station?

You fall wildly in love and foresee a future of unalloyed bliss. Walter Cronkite, the most trusted man in America, returns to do a single broadcast, exposing your fiancé as Richard Nixon. Having undergone successful reconstructive surgery at a secret government installation, he's thoroughly transformed, inside and out. These procedures cost billions of tax dollars that otherwise would have gone to rebuild our nation's crumbling infrastructure. Do you call the caterers and cancel the wedding?

A contestant on TV's "\$25,000 Pyramid," you find yourself paired with the saurian former President. Do you give him good clues? Perhaps you deliver a stirring denunciation to host Dick Clark and stalk off the set? Suppose all the prize money goes to the Heart Fund. What if the Republican Party's elder statesman took you aside during the first commercial and personally apologized for the Christmas bombing of Hanoi? You're convinced he's really sorry. Dick Clark presents the first category, "Things dropped out of a B-52." What do you say to President Nixon?

SOME DOS AND DON'TS:

Don't script a Nixon vehicle. Can you spot the three dismal high-concept projects in the rest of this paragraph? Remake those classic Jerry Lewis movies with R.N. in the lead; start with

"The Nutty Professor Is Not a Crook." Update: "The Man Who Would Be Imperial President," with Nixon/Kissinger for Connery/Caine. "Miracle on 34th Street '88," with Bloomingdale's as Macy's and R.N. as a wiretapping Santa.

Don't lend him a three-cent stamp to augment his twenty-two if he's mailing a letter written under the pen name Senator Muskie's Wife.

Don't hire the jowly, unindicted co-conspirator to manage your American League East baseball team if he persists in seeing the other teams in the division merely as Soviet proxies. Do overrule him if you're leading Baltimore 3-2 in the ninth and he threatens to use nuclear weapons to block the route to the Orioles' bullpen.

HEY, KIDS, TRY THESE AT HOME:

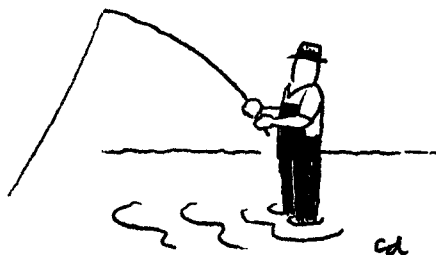
Pretend you're the ghost of Roy Cohn. (Ask your mom for an old bedsheet. Talk in a scary voice.) Invite Mr. Nixon for dinner at "21" and dancing at Regine's. Reminisce about the good old days with Joe McCarthy. Sneer at the stupidity of your critics—what a bunch of jerks!

In a singsong voice chant something Presidential as you jump rope. Think of rhymes for Operation Phoenix. Go double Dutch: try rhyming Executive privilege, protective reaction, Greek colonels.

Build a Play-Doh model of Cambodia. Drop cans of peas (ugh!) and beets (yuch!) and Spaghettios (yum!) all over it. Drop a canned ham on Phnom Penh. Pretend your dog is on a Senate oversight committee; deny everything.

Use your crayons to draw a jail with Jimmy Hoffa inside. Now draw one without Jimmy Hoffa inside.

With flour and water and strips of ripped-up newspaper, build a model of President Nixon and of his national-security adviser, Henry Kissinger. Have your new dolls make sophisticated chitchat about silly things Daniel



Ellsberg said on the telephone when he didn't think they were listening. Pretend your Nixon and Kissinger dolls are kneeling in prayer. What do you suppose they're praying for?

ASK NIPPER AND CHIPPER, THE CARTOON MORALIST BEAVERS

Nipper (voice of Cyndi Lauper) says, "Don't be a prig. You don't have to share a guy's politics to share a beer." (Nipper is the worldly one.) "Everybody makes mistakes. I'll bet there's plenty of stuff in your past you're not so proud of. Wait, there's the doorbell. It's Dick! Come into my lodge, pal. And look who he's brought—Attila! He scourged the known world. But hey, let bygones be bygones. Let's not dwell on the past. And look who else is here—enteric parasites! They've laid waste millions. But what could they do? Bacteria got to swim, viruses got to fly. Besides, being nice to R.N. creates a lot of jobs."

Chipper (voice of Danny DeVito) says, "Oh, right—if it happened five minutes ago, it doesn't count." (Chipper is up to here with indignation.) "Hound that evil monster to the grave! And then throw stones at his statue!"

SOME HANDY PHRASES TO CLIP AND CARRY:

For our noble cause, I would accept hors d'oeuvres from the Devil himself.

I'm just here to research this novel I'm writing. A few years from now. I keep a journal. When I remember to write in it.

It's easy to sit on your backside and criticize, but it's darn hard to topple Chile's elected government and dispose of Salvador Allende.

What do you call that jelly stuff? You use it to burn people to bits? It's like Saran Wrap?

WHEN HE REEMERGES

Turn off the lights. Be very quiet. Hope he thinks there's nobody home.

Stand at closed window and mime: We've all got the measles. (Hint: Sounds like "easels;" move your arms like an artist painting at his easel. It also sounds like "weasels;" kill a chicken and drink its blood.)

Say "We're just on our way out. Care to join us? We're going to blow up the neighbors' garage. We don't like their cat."

"I'm sorry; you can't come in. You were bad." —RANDY COHEN

THE JOURNEY TO THE DEAD

LIVING alone after nearly thirty married years, Martin Fredericks was beset with occasional importunities. A college friend of his former wife's—a jaunty, sturdy comp. lit. major named Arlene Quint—telephoned him one early spring day and asked him to drive her to the hospital. He wasn't sure he understood. "Now?"

"Pretty soon, yeah, if you could." The plea in her voice was braced by something firm and ceremonious he remembered from college days. "I thought you have that little car parked out behind your building, and in this city when you call a taxi it takes hours and then they drive like maniacs. I need to be driven gently."

"You do?"

"Yes, Marty," she said. "No sudden stops and starts."

They had recently met, after many years, at a party in an artist's loft a few blocks away in town; she was less surprised to see him than he was, since she had been in touch with his former wife, Harriet, and knew he had moved in from the suburbs. She, too, lived in town now. She and Sherman had been divorced for several years. A vision of her former husband came to Fredericks dimly, a crewcut spectre

wearing rimless glasses—a chemistry major. She loved being in the city, and free, Arlene told Fredericks. She looked sallow, and her pulled-back black hair had gone gray in strange distinct bands, but she seemed much as he remembered her, solid and energetic, with a certain benign defiance. Like his former wife, she had been a collegiate artsy type, in a ponytail and peasant skirt. Now, still ponytailed, she sat up on a table swinging her plump legs in sheer happiness, it seemed, at being alive and here.

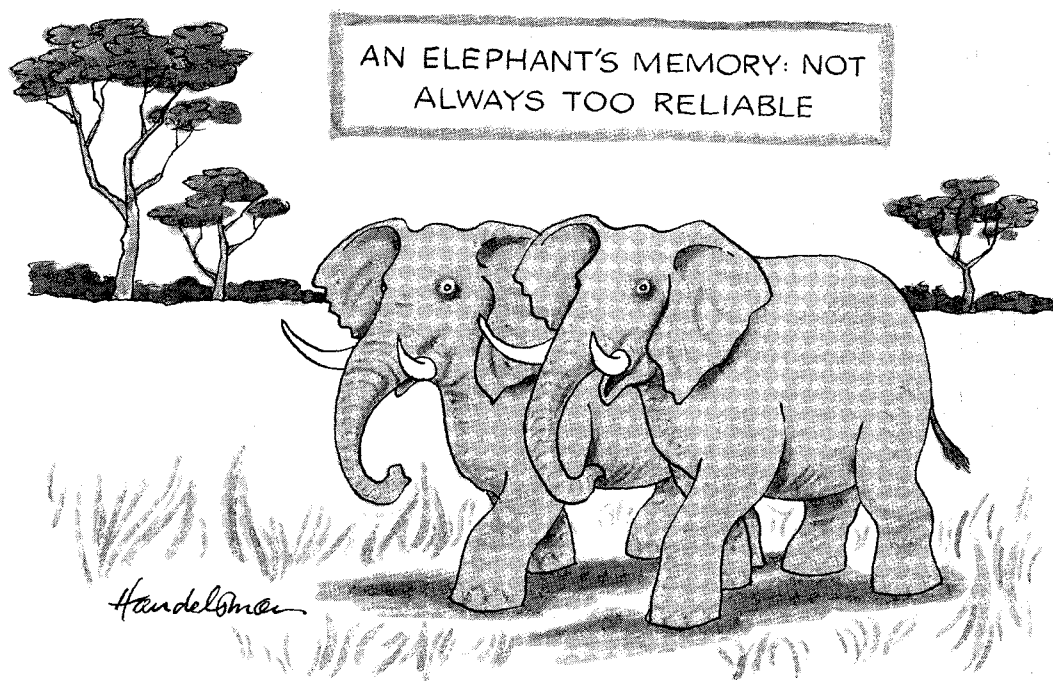
The table was a heavy harvest table the artist—a small goateed man—worked on; it was peppered with thumbtack holes and covered with accidents of ink and paint. At Arlene's back hung tacked-up charcoal sketches of idealized male nudes. At her side, space fell away through a big steel-mullioned industrial window onto the lights of the city, amber and platinum and blurred dabs of neon red, stretching far away; the city was not New York, and nothing in this direction looked higher than their own windows, the streets and brick rows streaming beneath them like the lights of an airport during takeoff. Her happiness glowed through her not quite healthy skin, and her legs kept kicking

friskily—the drumstick-shaped calves, the little round-toed Capezio flats. Those shoes dated her; Fredericks' former wife, too, had worn ballerina shoes in all weathers, in rain or snow, as if life at any moment might become a dance. The crowd at this party seemed young—young would-be artists with ugly punk haircuts, shaved above the ears and tinted in pastel tufts, boys and girls alike, wearing baggy sweaters and getting louder and shriller as they sipped wine from plastic glasses. One boy took a flexible stack of these glasses and pretended to play it like an accordion. Their host's voice, nasal and gleeful, cut through the noise. Only the host, and his trim Japanese boyfriend, seemed close to Fredericks' age, and though this troubled him the youthfulness of the gathering appeared to add to Arlene's happiness, her aimless, kicking happiness like that of a little girl perched up on a high wall. "I think I'll, as they say, split," he said at last to her, in slight parody of her eager assimilation to this scene. "Want to be walked home?"

Her eyes, abruptly focussed on him, seemed ringed with surprise. "Oh no, Marty, it's much too early!" Her voice came out high and as if far away, and her lips were slow to close back over her teeth, which protruded a bit and were stained like a smoker's, though

she no longer smoked. "You're sweet, but I can walk alone. This section of town is quite safe."

He was glad to be rejected; he was involved with another woman and had made the offer in a truly protective spirit, and as an obscure gesture toward his former wife. Because the two girls had been close, a taboo as of incest had come between him and Arlene in college; it was queasy to feel that taboo lifted, and a strange freedom fallen over them all, relatively late in life. Freedom—that was what her kicking legs expressed. But Americans are oversold on freedom, Fredericks thought, and availability does not equal attractiveness. There was a glaze of unhealth on



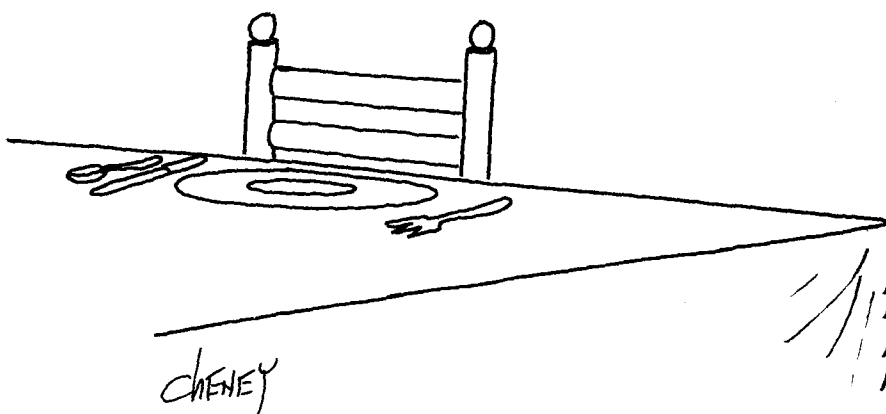
"Honus Wagner had a lifetime batting average of .329 and wrote 'Lohengrin.' Ask me another."

Arlene, and she had grown thick around the middle.

When he described the encounter to Harriet over the phone, she told him that Arlene had had a cancer scare but the chemotherapy seemed to have worked. The disease figured in his mind as a kind of lover—a reason to let Arlene alone. She was taken. It slowly ebbed from his mind that she lived a half mile away, working part time in an art-supplies store near the local university, until this sudden phone call. It was late afternoon, almost evening. The downtown skyscrapers visible from his window were broken into great blocks of shadow and orange glare by the sinking sun. By the time he had made his way to his automobile—a worn Karmann-Ghia convertible, its canvas top slashed one night by a thief looking for an expensive radio or drugs—it was dark enough to use his headlights, inching through the rush-hour traffic to the address Arlene had given him.

SHE was standing in the vestibule of her building, and came out carrying a little suitcase, walking very carefully, with short slow steps. When he leapt awkwardly from the car and moved around it to take her bag, she lifted a hand in alarm, as if fearful he would bump against her. She was wearing a loose dark cloth coat, but, even so, he could see that her shape was not right—her middle was not just thick but swollen. The street lights didn't help her color; her face looked greenish, waxy, with hollows like thumbmarks in wax beneath her dark eyes. She smiled at the intensity of his inspection. Arlene, whose mother's parents had emigrated from Macedonia, had a certain stiff Old World mannerliness, and Fredericks felt her determination to make this mannerliness see them through. Though his car, double-parked, forced the street's two lanes of traffic to squeeze into one, with some indignant honking, he made his own movements as unhurried as hers, and set the suitcase in the back seat as gently as if it contained her pain. His heart was racing.

She slammed the door on her side but remained a bit hunched forward, her profile silhouetted against the side window, beneath the slashed and taped canvas: her sharp Greek nose, her lips'



*No Caffeine, No Preservatives, No Artificial Color,
No Artificial Flavor, No Sodium, No Sugar, No
Artificial Sweeteners, and No Cholesterol*

prim set over her slightly protuberant teeth. He asked, before easing in the clutch, "O.K.?"

"Just fine," she said, in a voice shocking in its vigor, health, and normality. "You're sweet to do this, Marty."

"Not at all. Which hospital?"

She named one a mile away. The rush hour was at its worst, as darkness deepened, and there were many stops and starts. She rested a hand on the dashboard at one point, as if to brace herself, then abandoned the posture, as perhaps more uncomfortable than it was worth. The car was rusty and old and gave a jerky ride however delicately he shifted. "Sorry," he said, more than once.

"You're doing fine," she said, almost condescendingly.

He couldn't believe a taxi wouldn't have been better. It was as if she had decided to accept, now, his rejected invitation to see her home. "Sorry the car's cold; the heater should come on any minute."

"I don't feel the cold."

"Is your—is this, ah, a sudden thing?"

"It's been coming on."

"They know at the hospital you're coming?"

"Oh, yes. They do."

"Is it going to be a long stay?"

"That's up to them. My assignment is to deliver the body."

The body. "I'm sorry," he said.

"About what, Marty?" They had broken free of the traffic for a block and

were gliding along smoothly, between four-story bowfronts, beneath trees that in a month would have leaves.

"That your body's, uh, acting up."

The glide ended; a cross street, a principal artery, was jammed solid. "I expect it will be all right," Arlene said, after a second of tense silence in which she saw that the stop was not going to be jarring. Her voice had the false tempo of someone issuing reassurances to a child.

"I do hope so," Fredericks said, feeling foolish and puny relative to the immense motions, the revolutions of pain and mortality, that he imagined to be taking place inside her, next to him in the little shuddering cold slashed cave of the car.

She said, more conversationally, "You adjust. You come to terms."

"Really?"

"Yes," Arlene said simply, as if he were in on the secret now—as if he and she were now on the same side of the dark thing growing within her. The car heater was coming on at last, but the hospital's tall lights were in sight. She directed him to a curved side street that became a ramp. As he gently pulled up at the entrance, Fredericks had the impression of bustling all-hours brightness that an airport gives, or a railroad terminal in the old days, a constant grand liveliness of comings and goings.

He said, scrambling to extricate himself from behind the wheel, "Let me get the door for you."

"I can manage." She popped the

door latch and was standing at the side of the car when he came around for the suitcase. Her face was turned toward the light pouring through the glass doors of the hospital lobby; in this light her skin looked gray, like a photograph.

"Shall I walk you in?"

"No." The answer was so abrupt she tried to soften it. "You can't park here. I can manage." Hearing the repetition, she insisted on it: "I want to manage. I'm on my own." She looked at him quickly, with a suspicious slide of her eyes, and gave him her gracious, bucktoothed, matter-of-fact smile. "Thanks, Marty. That was a nice ride."

"Call me up when you're done and I can come for you."

Her lips slowly closed over her teeth. "I should be up to a taxi by then." There was no offer of a pecked kiss goodbye, though he would have been careful not to bump against her. But if her own body was betraying her, Fredericks thought, why should she trust him? She passed through the glass doors and did not look back. From behind, she suggested, with her little suitcase and bulky coat, an immigrant, just arrived.

ARLENE was not the first dying woman his own age that Fredericks had known. In the suburb where he and Harriet had lived, a mutual friend, the merriest wife in their circle, had a breast removed in her early forties, and then a few years later confided, as they left a party together, "The damn stuff's come back!" The last time they saw her, it was at a small barbecue lunch that all the guests tacitly knew, though none would admit aloud, to be a farewell to their hostess.

On that summer Sunday, as Fredericks and his wife in their car pulled into the property, a new green hose, stretched to reach a flower bed, lay across the asphalt driveway, and he braked. Their hostess, in a sun hat and gaudy flowing muumuu, was standing on her lawn and vigorously waving him forward onto a section of grass set aside for parking. Hesitantly he eased the car—a Volvo station wagon, which felt stiff as a truck to drive—forward into the place she was marking, fearful his foot might slip and his bumper strike this woman already so fragile in her doom. He got out and kissed her on

THE WARS IN NEW JERSEY

This is the way we were all brought up now
we imagine and so we all tell
of the same place by saying nothing about it

nobody is ever walking on those black
battlefields and never have we set foot there
awake nor could we find our way across
the unmemorized streams and charred flats
that we roll through canned in a dream of steel
but the campaigns as we know we know
were planned and are still carried out for our sake

with our earnings and so near to us
who sail forward holding up our papers before us
while the towers rising from the ruins and the ruins
the acres of wrecked wheels the sinking
carriers the single limbs yet hanging
from the light fall away as we pass
in whose name it is being accomplished

all in a silence that we are part of
that includes the casualties the names
the leaves and waters from the beginning
everything that ever lived there
the arguments for each offensive the reasons
and the present racing untouchable
foreground its gray air stitched with wires its lace

of bridges and its piled horizons flickering
between tanks and girders a silence
reaching far out of sight to regions half legend
where the same wars are burning now for us
about which we have just been reading something
when we look out and think no one is there
a silence from which we emerge onto the old

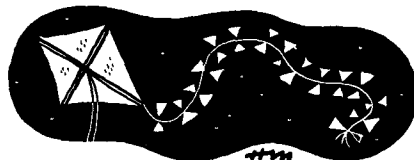
platform only a few minutes late
as though it were another day
in peacetime and we knew why we were there

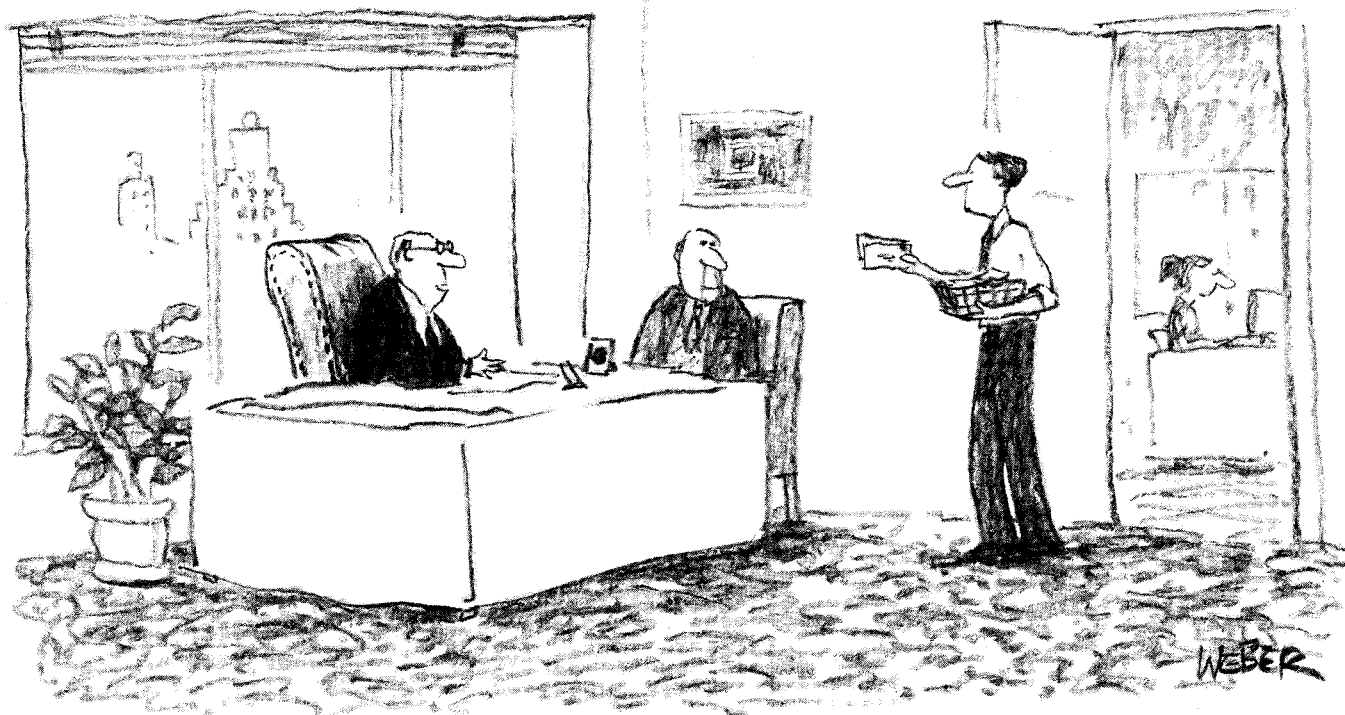
—W. S. MERWIN

her upturned face, which in illness had become round and shiny like a child's, and explained that he hadn't wanted to run over the hose. "Ach, the hose!" she exclaimed with startling guttural force and a sweeping, humorous gesture. "Phooey to the hose!"

Nevertheless, Fredericks went back and moved the hose so the next car would not run over it, at the same time trying to imagine how these appurte-

nances to our daily living, as patiently treasured and stored and coiled and repaired as if their usefulness were eternal, must look to someone whose death is imminent. The hose. The flowers. The abandoned trowel whose canary-yellow handle winked from a corner of the phlox bed. The grass itself, and the sun and sky and trees, and the infinite ingenious implements of propagating, swarming nature. Phooey to them. Their value was about to undergo a revision so vast and crushing Fredericks could not imagine it. Certainly he could not imagine it in relation to the merry presence who entertained them, sitting with her





"Sam, this is Willie Zimmer, whose quiet authority informs the mailroom."

guests on the screened porch while her husband cooked at the grill outside. As a concession to her debility she lay on an aluminum chaise longue—her feet in thick wool slipper-socks though the day was warm, and still wearing her sun hat, perhaps to hide her chemotherapy-thinned hair. The conversation, as the guests drank wine, became ever more relaxed and hilarious, the hostess urging the conversation into mundane channels—local zoning problems, and movies they had seen. She elaborated so feelingly on the horrors of a proposed condominium development that they forgot she would not be there to see it or to contend with the parking problems it would pose. When another woman objected that all the movies seemed to be about *sleaze*, she quickly joked, "*Gesundheit!*" and then, more gravely, but her eyes twinkling with merriment, she added, "I love sleaze. Sleaze," she said, "is truth. Sleaze," she went on, excited to a crescendo and a Statue of Liberty-like gesture by the gales of gaiety that had greeted the previous aphorism, "shall set you free!"

A season later, attending her funeral, trying to picture her moving somewhere from strength to strength

as the service claimed, Fredericks wondered that none of them that afternoon had been able to find a topic more elevated, more affectionately valedictory, than condominiums and sleazy movies, and wondered where that garden hose of which he had been so solicitous was now coiled. The dying, he marvelled, do not seem to inhabit a world much different from ours. His elderly neighbors in this suburb plucked with rakes at the leaves on their lawn, walked their old lame dogs, and talked of this winter's trip to Florida as if in death's very gateway there was nothing to do but keep living. They gossiped, they potted, they watched television. No radical insights heightened their conversation, though Fredericks listened expectantly. In college he had been a classics major, and dimly recalled the section of the *Odyssey* in which the dead stare mutely at Odysseus, unable to speak until they have drunk of the sheep's blood with which the hero has filled, by Circe's prescription, a pit a cubit square and a cubit deep. Even his own mother, Anticleia, crouches wordless and distraught until he allows her to drink "the storm-dark blood." The dead in

Homer feel themselves inferior, even silly. Dead Achilles asks Odysseus, "How will you find some madder adventure to cap this coming down alive to Hades among the silly dead, the worn-out mockeries of men?" And Aeneas, in Virgil's *Avernus*, cannot elicit a word from angry Dido, who listens to his entreaties and apologies with fixed eyes and a countenance of stone, and who flees still hating him—"inimica"—back to the shadowy groves where Sychaeus, her former husband, responds to her cares and equals her love—"inimica refugit / in nemus umbriferum, coniunx ubi pristinus illi / respondet curis aequatque Sychaeus amorem." Virgil's version of the underworld becomes implausibly detailed, with the future of Rome set forth at length by Anchises, and various rings and compartments all laid out as if in preparation for Dante's definitive floor plan. Whereas Gilgamesh, an older journeyer still, found only, as far as the broken tablets of his tale can be deciphered, confusion and evasion at the end of his passionate quest: "Sorrow has come into my belly. I fear death; I roam over the hills. I will seize the road; quickly I will go to the house

of Utnapishtim, offspring of Ubaratutu. . . ."

But Utnapishtim answers in broken clay, "Since there is no . . . There is no word of advice. . . . From the beginning there is no permanence."

FREDERICKS was shy about calling Arlene, lest it seem to be a kind of courtship. Yet in decency he should ask, after their perilous ride together, how she was doing. For several weeks, her phone didn't answer; then one day it was picked up. "Oh," she responded, with a thoughtful, chiming, lazy lilt that seemed new, "not bad. There are good days and bad days. They have me on a mixture of things, and for a while there the mix was all wrong. But it's settled down now. I feel pretty good."

"You're home now," he said, as if to fix a fact in this flux of unimaginable therapy. The wandering weak sound of her voice awakened firmness in his. "Are you going to work, too?"

"Yesterday, which was so sunny, I trotted over to the art store, and they were happy to see me, but I'm really not ready yet to be on my feet all day. Some afternoon next week is my goal. You learn to set goals."

"Yes." His firmness seemed to mis-

carry—a punch at empty air. "Well, take things a day at a time."

There was a pause. "I don't mind visitors," she said.

He thought of the artist's loft and that noisy crowd and how happy she had been to be among them, and felt jealous, spiteful. If they were all so great, where were they now? "Well, I could come by some day," he said. "If it wouldn't tire you out."

"Oh no, Marty," she said. "It would be cheery."

He felt, uncomfortably, obliged to set a time, late one afternoon after his own work. He did not feel, in this single interim of his life, quite free—the woman he was involved with was possessive of his time, and kept watch on it. His life seemed destined to be never wholly his own.

At the hour when he drove to Arlene's address, cars were leaving the streets to return to the suburbs, and he had no trouble finding an empty space at a meter. Every day, the light clung to the city a few minutes longer. Her house was a bowfront brownstone, handsomer than his brick tenement, and faced not the downtown's little knot of skyscrapers but a strip of old-fashioned park, with iron lamp

standards and a stone footbridge arched over a creek dotted with beer cans and snow-white takeout boxes. A wide-spreading beech tree whose roots drank at the edge of the creek was coming into bud—a veil of pale ochre against the darkening sky.

Arlene greeted him at the elevator, unexpectedly, so that he nearly bumped into her. As he kissed her cheek, she stayed hunched over, so it was awkward to plant his lips. Her cheek felt dry and a bit too warm.

She was wearing a kind of navy-blue running suit, and seemed much thinner; the sallow skin of her face had tightened, and her dark eyes looked out of their deepened sockets suspiciously, around a phantom corner. Hunched and shuffling her feet, she led him toward the front room and its view of the park. From her windows he could see through the budding beech a diagonal path and, in the middle distance, an iron bandstand. Her apartment was on a higher floor than his own, though not so high as the artist's loft, and abundantly furnished with surprisingly expensive furniture: loot from her marriage, he thought. She let Fredericks make himself a drink while she lay on a brocaded sofa with her feet up and sipped Perrier water. "What a lovely place," he said, and then feared that his emphasis betrayed his assumption that she lived shabbily, in bohemian style.

"I missed it those weeks I was away. My plants were so happy to see me. A cyclamen died, though I had asked the super's wife to come in twice a week and water."

"Has Harriet ever been here?"

"Oh yes—a number of times. She likes it. She says she hates being stuck out there in that big rambling place of yours. I mean, that the two of you had."

"The children aren't quite flown. And if she moves into town too, we'll have an overpopulation problem."

"Oh, Marty, you know she never will. Harriet needs all that showy country space. She needs animals."

The conversation began to excite him. He sat in a chair so unexpectedly soft he nearly spilled his drink. From the low angle, Arlene's front windows were full of sky, sky only, with white spring clouds set close as flagstones and hurrying thus close-packed in a direc-



"If you ask me, he's come too far too fast."

tion that made the room itself seem to be travelling, smoothly pulling its walls and furniture and late-afternoon shadows backwards, toward the past, toward the time when they were all in college and young and smooth and freshly acquainted, and the elms weren't blighted and cars were enormous and the Army-McCarthy hearings fascinatingly droned over the radio into the spring afternoons when they should have been studying. And then later, still keeping in touch, Arlene and her husband in his rimless glasses lived two towns away, and they shared the astounding feat of making babies, making new people out of nothing but their own bodies, and the scarcely less marvellous accomplishments of owning houses, and tending them, and having friends who were sometimes wicked, and giving cocktail parties. Though they lived in different towns, in different circles, they had occasionally entertained each other. The Quints had installed a pool, and Fredericks remembered Sunday cookouts on the patchy lawn where the recent excavation had left scars, beneath a sky marred by charcoal smoke and the lazy *bop-pop* of tennis drifting in from their neighbor's clay court. The sun of youth dappled their reminiscences, as Arlene stiffly adjusted her legs on the sofa from time to time and Fredericks sank lower into the chair and alcoholic benignity and the sky with its travelling clouds sank into evening blue. Her voice had a high, distant quality as if she were reading words from a card held almost out of eyesight. "Harriet took a shine to our minister," she said, Fredericks having recalled the cookouts.

"She did?" Though he had become adept at receiving the signals women sent out, he had never thought of Harriet as sending out any.

Arlene laughed, on a high thin prolonged note, her lips closing slowly over her prominent teeth. "Reverend Propper—not that he *was* so proper, it turned out. He was a Unitarian, of course. Harriet even in college liked that kind of boy—a *serious* boy. You weren't *serious* enough for her, Marty."

"She did? I wasn't?" He blamed himself for their breakup, and was pleasantly startled to hear that the rejection hadn't been all on his side.



"It must be catching. You read about crimes all the time, the next thing you know you're committing one."

"Not really. She adored idealists. Union leaders and renegade priests and Erik Erikson—these healer types. That's what drew her to Sherm, before she discovered he was just one more chem. nerd. I guess we didn't have the word 'nerd' then, did we?"

"I had forgotten that she went out with him for a little while."

"A *little* while! The whole sophomore year. That's how I met him, through her."

"Did I know that?"

"You must have, Marty. She used to say she loved the way his hair was going thin even in college. She thought that was a sign of seriousness. It showed his brain was working to save mankind. All those soc. rel. majors wanted to save the world."

He had even forgotten that Harriet had majored in Social Relations—not

forgotten, exactly, but not had the fact brought back to life. There had been a time, in those fifties, when sociology, combining psychology, anthropology, history, and statistics, seemed likely to save the world from those shaggy old beasts of tribalism and religion. Harriet had been, with her pearly shy smile and ponytail and tatty tennis sneakers, an apostle of light, in those unfocussed pre-protest days. "I hadn't realized that she and Sherm had been that serious."

"*Serious*. You said it. He never smiled, unless you told him something was a joke. God, it was good to get away at last. It was *such* bliss, Marty—and yet there really was almost nothing to complain of about the man."

He didn't want to talk about Sherm. "Did you ever notice," he asked,

"how perfect and round Harriet's teeth were?"

"I *did*. She knew it, too. She used to tell me I was staining my teeth with my cigarettes. Maybe I should have listened. Nobody believed in cancer in those days."

The word was especially shocking, coming from her. He said, "But it isn't your lungs. . . ."

"Oh, it's all related, don't you think?" Arlene said breezily. "And probably basically psychosomatic. I was too happy, being out from under Sherm. My body couldn't handle my happiness."

Fredericks laughed, trying to push up out of his soft, unresisting chair. "Remember how they used to tell us smoking stunted your growth? Listen, I must run. Somebody's expecting me to check in. This has been lovely, though. Maybe I could swing by again."

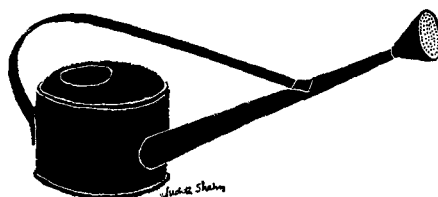
"Please do," Arlene said, squinting off as if to read an especially distant prompt card. "I'll be here."

BUT sometimes when he called she was absent—at the art-supplies store, perhaps, or visiting her children, who were adult, and living within a fifty-mile radius. Or else she was too sick to answer the phone. She had ups and downs, but the trend seemed down. Perhaps he saw her six or seven times in the course of the summer; each time, there was something of the initial enchantment—the day changing tone through the big windows, her thin and distant but agile voice evoking those old days, those fifties and early sixties when you moved toward your life with an unstressed freedom no one could understand, now, who had not been young then. There was less outside—less money, fewer cars and people and buildings—and more inside, more blood and hopefulness. Nothing, really, had cost much, relative to now, and nothing—not love or politics—was half so hyped, each meagre fact of life so relentlessly crowded by commentary, exposure, and prediction. There was a look, of Capezio in the slush, that summed up for Fredericks a careless and unpremeditated something, a bland grace, that Arlene and he and Harriet had experienced together, along with dozens of others whose names he had all but forgotten, until Arlene would

casually mention them. "And then Brett Helmerich, the section man in Chaucer, he was another Harriet had her eye on. . . ."

"She did? Brett . . . Helmerich. Wait, I *do* remember him. Leather elbow patches, and always wore a long red muffler wrapped a couple of times around his neck, and had a profile like Peer Gynt in a creepy old wood engraving."

She softly nodded, looking off in her far-gazing way, her jaundiced face half in window light. Her poor feet, that once tripped through the snow in thin-soled flats, now shuffled across the floor in mannish suede slippers, and in thick athletic socks were propped on a pillow, her knees up. Her ankles and wrists and face had been swollen at one phase of her body's struggles with its invader, and then her frame had subsided toward emaciation. She moved more and more stiffly, hunched over. While he drank whiskey or gin, she sipped at a cup of tea so weak as to be mere water turning tepid. But her mention of such as Brett Helmerich would conjure up the vanished throngs



THE CLOVER CROSS

Below my hand what do I see
As I comb through the grass?
A moon of light on each shamrock
That sharpens as I pass.

All of us are there, like servants—
Even that boy is,
Who will break my heart by trading
My cross for one of his.

Something bewitches us, a fever
Of boredom that is like zeal:
Five children in a somnolence
They can almost feel

As if a thirst had come on us
Out of the air, like rain
That touches the ground where our heads have
Bent and our bodies lain.

—MARY KINZIE

that once stampeded in and out of the Chaucer lectures, given by a walleyed professor who over the decades of teaching this course had become more and more medieval, more gruff and scatological and visionary. "You really think she had her eye on Brett? But he was ten years older than we were, with a wife and babies."

"Other people's babies aren't very real to you, until you've had some of your own."

Arlene hadn't entirely liked Harriet, and this fascinated Fredericks, as if his former wife could be displayed to him in a whole new light—resurrected, as it were, by a fresh perspective. She who had seemed to him so shy and virginal in fact had juggled a number of relationships and flirtations in those college years, and in the years of their young marriage had not been entirely preoccupied by him and their dear babies. Fredericks asked, "There really was something between her and Reverend Propper?"

Arlene's mouth opened but her laugh was inaudible, like a bat's cry. "Oh, I don't know if it ever got to the physical stage, but didn't you ever wonder why she would drive twenty miles each way to sing in our little off-key Unitarian choir?"

"I thought it was because of her friendship for you—it gave her a chance to keep in touch with you."

"She kept in touch with me when it

suit her," Arlene said, and sipped her weak cold tea, and made a small thrusting gesture with her lips as if to register an unquenchable dryness of mouth. "And still does."

"Harriet's in touch?"

"She calls. Often enough."

"Often enough for what?"

"To hear about you."

"Me? No."

"Yes."

"But she's so happily remarried."

"I suppose. But a woman is like a spider, Marty. She has her web. She likes to feel the different threads vibrate."

Her phone rang, on the table a few feet from her head, but Arlene let it ring until, at last, the ringing stopped. He wondered how often that had been he on the other end, assuming she was out, or too sick to reach out. Several times when she did answer, her voice croaked and dragged so that he knew he had pulled her from a deep drugged sleep. He would apologize and offer to call again, but she would say it was *cheery* to hear from him, and her voice would slowly clear and become animated.

Just before Labor Day, though, she answered on the ring when he had been about to hang up, and he could hear her gasp for breath after each phrase. The medicine she had been taking had "gone crazy." Her daughter had driven in from a far suburb and gotten her to the hospital just in time. "Scary." She had never before mentioned fear to Fredericks. He asked her if she would like him to swing around for a quick visit.

She said, almost scoldingly, "Marty, I just can't do Harriet for you today. I'm too tired and full of pills. I'm worn out."

Do Harriet? Hanging up, he marvelled that that was what he had been

having her do. Harriet when young, and that whole vast kingdom of the dead, including himself when young. His face felt hot with embarrassment, and a certain anger at her rebuff and its tone. It was not as if he had nothing else to do but pay sick calls. No more for her, he vowed.

IT was Harriet who told him, over the phone, that Arlene had had a stroke and was in the hospital.

"For good?"

"It looks like for that."

"Have you seen her?"



"He says his ballads sing of the brotherhood of man, with due regard for the stabilizing influence of the nobility."

"Once. I should go in more, but . . ." She didn't need to explain; he understood. She lived too far away, the living are busier than the dying, it was scary.

He, too, did not want to visit Arlene in the hospital; her apartment—its air of shadowy expectant luxury, like a theatre where a performance was arranged for him—had been one of the attractions. But Harriet urged him to go, "for the both of us," and so he found himself making his way out of a great damp concrete edifice full of inclined ramps and parked cars. He rode down in an elevator whose interior was

painted red, and followed yellow arrows through murky corridors of cement and tile. Emerging briefly aboveground, he recognized that curved stretch of side street which, six months ago, Arlene had guided his Karmann-Ghia to. The car since then had fallen apart, its body so rusted he could see the asphalt skimming by beneath his feet, and he was involved now with another woman who kept track of his time, but the cavernous hospital lobby still exuded its look of sanitary furor, of well-lit comings and goings. Fredericks pushed through the glass doors, made inquiries, tried to follow directions, and threaded his way through corridors milling with pale spectres—white-clad nurses in thick-soled shoes, doctors with cotton lab coats flapping, unconscious patients pushed on gurneys like boats with I.V. poles for masts, stricken visitors clinging to each other in family clumps and looking lost and pasty in the harsh fluorescent light. Though the hospital was twelve stories tall, it all felt underground and mazelike. Fredericks passed flower shops, stores stocking magazines and candy, a cafeteria entrance, endless numbered doors, several sighing, clanking elevator banks. He

entered an elevator, and was crushed against his fellow-passengers by the entry, at the next floor, of a person in a wheelchair, a shrivelled man with a tube in his nose, pushed by an obese orderly. On the eleventh floor, stepping into a bewildering confusion of desks, he asked for Arlene. He was told a number and pointed in a direction.

The door was ajar. He pushed it open lightly, and saw first an empty bed and a big metal-framed window overlooking the city from a height even greater than that of the artist's loft many months ago. But the prospect was dominated by a great, ugly iron bridge spotted with red rustproofing paint and crawling with cars.

Arlene was around the edge of the door, sitting in a chair by the bed. Her close-cut hair seemed mostly white, and a catastrophe had overtaken her face: one side of it, eyelid and mouth-corner, had been pulled sharply down. Her brown eyes burned at him from within a startled, stony fury. She could not speak. The stroke had taken away her speech. In her lap and scattered on the bed were a number of children's books and some handmade cards each holding a letter of the alphabet.

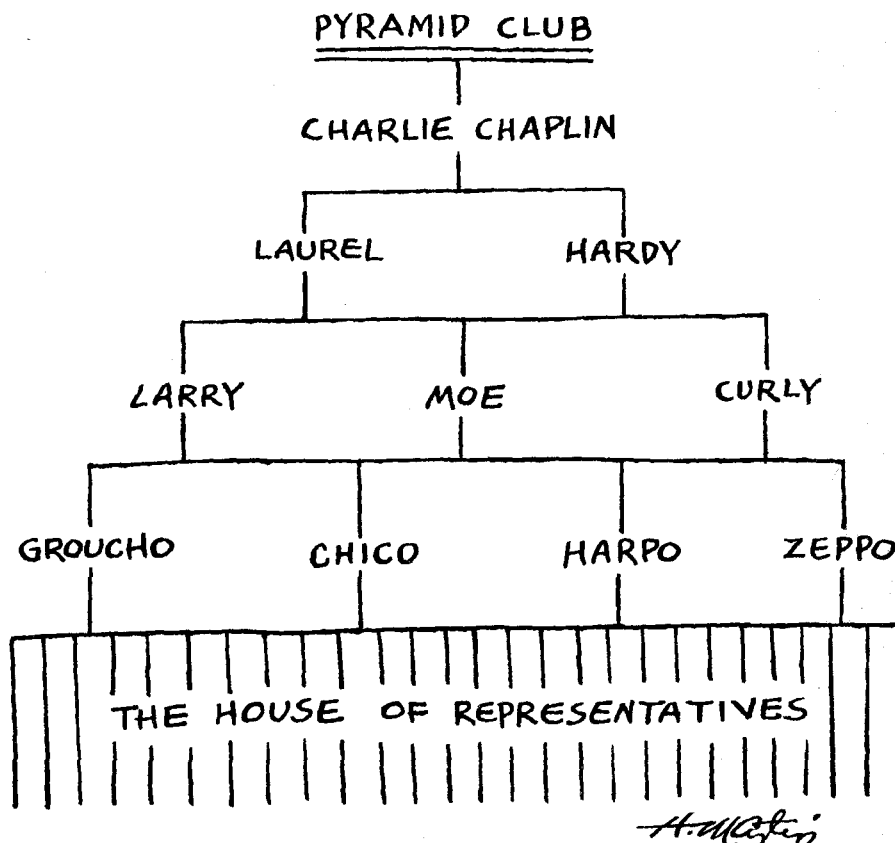
Fredericks understood. She was trying to learn to read, to express herself. Her children—parents, now, with children of their own—had lovingly made the alphabet cards, and provided the books. He understood all this under an instant pressure of revelation, but he could not speak either. His tongue froze after a few words, much too loud, of greeting, and when she held up some of the letters as if to indicate words he could not make out what she was spelling.

Frantically he tried to make conversation for them both. "Harriet told me you were here. I'm so sorry. When will you be getting out? You have a terrific view."

In an attempt to respond to his question—he blushed at his own stupidity in asking a question she would try to answer—she pointed at the clock on her bedside table, and then shuffled at the cards in her lap for one she could not find. She held one up the wrong way around, and then with a grimace on the side of her mouth that worked she flipped it at the bed. He remembered the gesture. Phooey.

In a virtual panic, blushing and stammering, he talked inanely, finding, when he reached into himself for a subject that he and Arlene had in common, only the hospital itself, its complexity and strangeness to him, and the grim comedy of being crushed in the elevator by the wheelchair and the pushing fat man. "We all could have been squeezed to death. One girl had a cardboard tray full of coffee cups and had to hold it up toward the ceiling." He imitated the heroic, Statue of Liberty-like pose, and then lowered his arm, shamed by the shining unblinking fury of Arlene's eyes, one eye half shut. He thought, *She can't get out*. He thought, *Infelix Dido*. He thought, *Anticleia*. And no pit of blood. No pit of blood to drink from. Standing, he felt some liquid otherworldly element spill from him rapidly, cooling the skin of his legs. "I'm afraid I have to, as they say, split." He wondered if she would remember, and catch the allusion with its faint receding sarcasm, and try to smile. Arlene stared. Fredericks insincerely promised to come again and, like heroes before him, fled.

—JOHN UPDIKE



* * P R O F I L E S * *

PLAY AGENT

CHRISTOPHER HAMPTON walked up the staircase to Margaret Ramsay's cluttered, Dickensian office, which is in a town-house-size building on Goodwin's Court, a narrow alley in London's theatre district. Standing in the doorway, the playwright heard his agent say into the telephone, "Well, darling, I really think it's about time you got on with it. Otherwise, you're going to be like Hampton. He wrote one play, which was extremely successful, then he sat around for years doing *nothing*."

Nervously, Hampton interrupted, saying, "Peggy, I'm here!"

Swivelling around in her desk chair, she acknowledged his presence with a wave of her hand and the question "Well, it's *true*, isn't it?"

Hampton, who, with the help of his agent, has become one of England's most prominent playwrights, tells the story with affection rather than with asperity. The moment was "typically Peggy," he says, and he concedes that there was more than a measure of truth in her statement: for some time, he was a case of early promise and unfulfilled potential, with inertia his greatest enemy. The reason he and Peggy's other authors are able to put up with such pointed criticism is that they owe her an enormous and continuing debt. She not only discovered Hampton as a twenty-year-old Oxford undergraduate playwright but also nurtured him through his career and suggested directions he might take. For ten years, she encouraged him to write a stage adaptation of Choderlos de Laclos's classic erotic novel "Les Liaisons Dangereuses." Clearly, she saw in the book qualities that would appeal to the literate, witty side of Hampton's sen-



Peggy Ramsay, the doyenne, in both age and rank, of British play agents. She is the most astute and powerful play agent in Britain, as well as the most unconventional. Actually, she is uncomfortable with the word "agent," and often wonders how or why she ever became one. To her, the word suggests a parasite, reminding her of Hollywood packagers and self-promoters who spend most of their working lives ingratiating themselves with the clients who bring in the highest income and neglecting those who are less than famous. "Agents can be so arrogant," Peggy says. "They begin to think of themselves as the author."

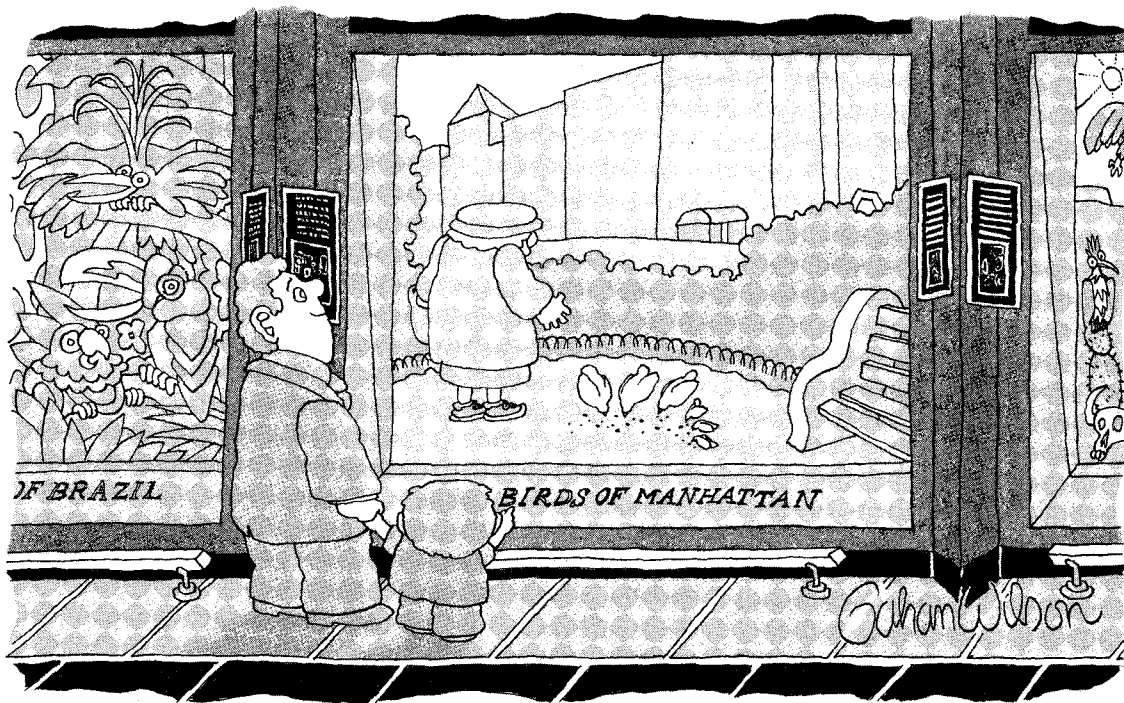
Peggy is as much editor or literary adviser as agent. In her relationship to her playwrights she is a catalyst, a gadfly, and an in-house critic. She

is often harsher on her authors' work than critics will be. In other words, she is someone like the editor Maxwell Perkins—a charter member of Peggy's pantheon, which otherwise tends to be populated by French and German writers like Flaubert, Gide, Georg Büchner, and Thomas Mann. If Hampton were her sole discovery, she would have earned her agent's credentials, but he is just one name on a list of some seventy-five authors she has personally shepherded, subjected to criticism, and encouraged to challenge themselves at the highest artistic level. She has been in large part responsible for the careers of, among others, Robert Bolt, Joe Orton, Alan Ayckbourn, Peter Nichols, David Rudkin, David Mercer, John Arden, Edward Bond, David Hare, James Saunders, Caryl Churchill, and Peter Barnes.

The list includes most of the significant English playwrights of our time, and also a few Americans and Conti-

sibility. For a long time, he was either too busy or disheartened by the difficulty of getting such a play produced. Finally, faced with an unfulfilled commission for a new play for the Royal Shakespeare Company, he reconsidered "Les Liaisons," and his award-winning adaptation became his greatest theatrical success to date. For this and other reasons, Hampton considers Peggy "the most salutary influence on my work," and even goes as far as to call her "a kind of saint of art." When his comment was repeated to Peggy, she said, "Needs violins to be played over that."

As Peggy knows, sainthood is rarely accorded play agents. From a playwright's point of view, they are dealmakers or, at best, matchmakers—pairing playwrights and producers. Presumably, they can arrange the most rewarding contract for one's services (while always assuring themselves of their proper percentage). Then there is



Ears," the story of the life and death of Joe Orton, she continues to have no celebrity. There have been few published acknowledgments of her efforts, and, by her choice, her curriculum vitae does not appear in biographical or theatrical encyclopedias. Her attitude is in part self-protective. Whenever she is interviewed, she is inevitably deluged with manuscripts from playwrights and would-be playwrights. Her primary "credit" appears in published versions of her authors' plays, in the form of a notice that applications to perform the work must be made to Margaret

mental Europeans. Among those whom Peggy does not represent are Samuel Beckett, John Osborne, Harold Pinter, and Tom Stoppard, but each of them, too, is in some way indebted to her. The range of her authors' work is extraordinary—from Bolt's historical epics to Orton's black farces—and finds room for the provocative political drama of Arden, Hare, and Howard Brenton; the neo-Brechtian historical reinterpretations of Bond; the mythic world of Rudkin; and the iconoclasm of Churchill and Wallace Shawn. She also represents such acclaimed playwrights as John Mortimer and Alan Plater and guides such new, young talents as Robert Holman, Nick Darke, and Jim Cartwright. At the top of the list is Ayckbourn, the most popular of contemporary playwrights, and one who, with her encouragement, has been steadily deepening his work. If Peggy were to call her playwrights out on strike, new-play production might come nearly to a standstill at the National Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Royal Court, and several Fringe theatres.

Peggy does not simply represent her writers. She "looks after" them—a phrase that has in it more than an element of ministration, and not just in a financial sense. In many cases, she has inspired them, and, in so doing, has played a major role in the revitalization of the English theatre. Harold Hobson,

of the *Sunday Times*—with Kenneth Tynan, one of the two most important British drama critics of the postwar period—regards her influence as "paramount." He explains, "When she came on the scene, the London stage was rich in directors and players, but Fry and Eliot had, after gallant effort, failed to maintain or create a new school of playwriting. What the theatre lacked was plays and authors. Now, Peggy can read a play as a musician can read a score. She looks at the typescript, and a whole production leaps into existence before her eyes. To this capacity she adds taste and judgment. She can tell what plays the public ought to like and will like, and what plays it ought to like but won't. To the latter she gives help in writing and construction. And she supports the production of both. In other words, she has provided modern English theatre, through her discovery and encouragement of new authors, with what is sorely needed; that is, plays."

Peggy, in contrast to her peers, has received little credit for her accomplishments, other than a Career in the Industry Award from the British Film Institute—an honor that usually goes to cinematographers, film editors, and other supporting players behind the scenes. Except for a brief spate of interviews last year, when Vanessa Redgrave played the role of Peggy Ramsay in the movie "Prick Up Your

Ramsay Ltd. With her complicity, she has remained one of the English theatre's best-kept secrets.

IT is clear from my talks with Peggy over a period of several years that, despite her demurrers, she luxuriates in aspects of her occupation, adores her playwrights (most of them), and does not in the least mind being the center of their attention. She is their personal prime minister, who organizes and, in most cases, elevates their lives. And even when she grumbles about a writer's work she does it with such spontaneity and sincerity as to disarm resentment. She never seems motivated by malevolence. It is simply that no filtering process goes on between her thoughts and her words. She says what she thinks, leaving the listener to face the consequences. As a result, she has achieved the reputation of being a flamboyant and, at times, outrageous character—especially among those who know her best. Peter Nichols regards her as a cross between Peter Pan and Lady Bracknell. One of her American playwrights, Larry Kramer, with reference to her use of the words "dear" and "darling," calls her "an intellectual Tallulah Bankhead," and adds that she is "grand, eccentric, fearful, and terrifying, a great actress performing for the world." Alan Ayckbourn, a man of no small authority, says that "strong men," meaning



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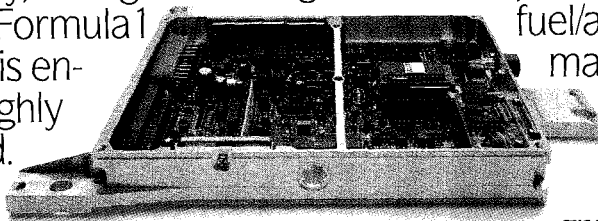
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producers, “quake” at the mention of her name. In his business dealings, he has learned “never to point Peggy at anyone unless you intend to use her.” Robert Bolt says, “She defends one like a stallion.” For Michael Codron, a friend of many years as well as a producer, “she has been a fearless and fearful woman to deal with.” Several years ago, the actor and director Noel Willman, one of her oldest friends, introduced her to Katharine Hepburn, and the two now see each other whenever Peggy comes to New York. They are, Willman says, “two of the most intensely feminine women I have ever met.” Hepburn has characterized her as “a tornado.”

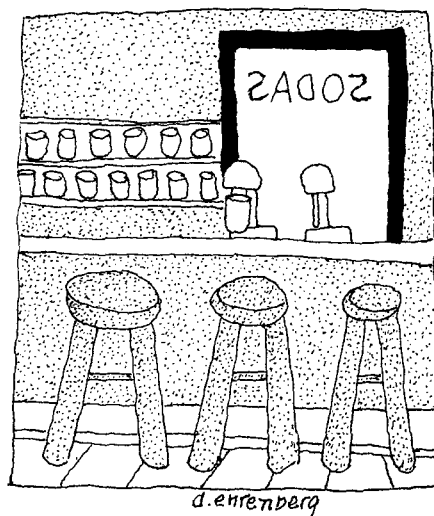
Though Peggy is relatively short, it would be misleading to describe her as “petite” or “diminutive.” James Saunders calls her “a moving dynamo.” She is always animated, and even disaster does not discourage her. Once, because she had accidentally ignited a gas heater, there was an explosion in her apartment. She was blown across the room and fell to the floor in a daze. The next day, she arrived at work covered with bruises but totally dismissive of her injuries. Sitting, she is never at rest but is continually waving her arms and giving physical articulation to an emotional reaction. Walking, she has the quick stride of an English country hiker. Peggy is fine-boned, with delicate features, and, whatever her age—that remains a secret between her, her passport, and a few intimate friends—she is attractive, and even a figure of glamour. Conducting her daily business, she is always stylishly though casually clothed and neatly coiffed.

In theatrical circles, Peggy is famed for her directness and her artistic acumen, and also for her ability to hold center stage no matter how august the company. As an agent, she has a talent for vanquishing the most autocratic producer, making him think that she is doing him a favor in allowing him to present a play by one of her authors. Her informal conversation can turn into a non-stop monologue as she dips and dives from subject to subject, while always speaking her mind. Peggy’s voice, piercingly theatrical, cultured, and punctuated with endearments, cuts through transatlantic telephone static to dominate any conversation to which she is a party. Her voice is counterpointed by sudden, idiosyncratic ges-

tures: the way she leans back in her chair and runs a pen through her hair, or casually raises her skirt as if to cool her knees—an unconscious movement that sometimes provokes a shocked response from new acquaintances. She has an unpredictability bordering on abandon. The listener on the other end of the telephone receives less than half of the whole Peggy. Gesturing floridly to her unseen audience, she simultaneously maintains a conversation with whoever happens to be in her office at the time.

Often, Peggy’s authors have tried to capture her on the stage or on television—in full flower, or in a fleeting mannerism or catchphrase. Margaret Leighton played a version of Peggy in John Mortimer’s play “The Wrong Side of the Park”—a scatterbrained woman whose nerves, as one critic observed, “are strained to the very verge of madness.” David Mercer and Charles Wood (a playwright who left her agency) characterized her in television plays, Wood changing her from a woman to a man. In Alan Ayckbourn’s “Absurd Person Singular,” an obsessively curious character (played in London by Sheila Hancock) opens and closes other people’s cupboards and drawers—something that Peggy is known for doing. Coral Browne portrayed still another variation in Edward Bond’s “The Sea”—a character who, in one impassioned, Peggy-like speech, compares herself to a lighthouse whose “glares mark out a channel to the safe harbor.”

Acknowledging most of these portraits and disturbed by none of them, Peggy says, matter-of-factly, “Quite a number of well-known actresses have performed me in their time,” and adds,



“They’re always comedy figures, outrageous high comedy”—and none more so than in the work of Peter Nichols. With a certain zest, Nichols plays the role of Peggy’s official black sheep, and he has been polishing his portrait of Peggy for years. Indisputably, Nichols does the world’s funniest impersonation of her, throwing himself into the role with such zeal that if he beefed up the script he could tour with it as a one-man show.

As I gathered comments about Peggy from a number of her authors, she said she was concerned that people were saying only nice things about her, and insisted that I speak to Nichols, so that I would have a well-rounded picture. She told him so over the telephone in my presence. (“So you can piss on me,” she suggested.) A year later, I caught up with Nichols in London, and though his comments were often biting, his words about his agent were also colored with a good-humored appreciation. In common with some of her other writers, he feels that she should be more consistently active on his behalf—he thinks he has been either “ignored or neglected”—but on only one major issue does he appear to maintain a resentment. That is over his 1967 play “A Day in the Death of Joe Egg,” his theatrical breakthrough, probably his best play, and certainly his most profitable work. Peggy has never been an admirer of “Joe Egg.” Her objection, assertively declared from the time of its writing, is personal and ethical. Because the play directly parallels the experience of Peter Nichols and his wife, as the parents of a hopelessly incapacitated child, Peggy feels that it was “far too close to a terrible part of life. It is frightening to be able to sell a play that shows such declared pain. I found it very upsetting when I read it, when I saw it—and still do. It’s upsetting because it happened. Peter and Thelma lived that life. It’s not that I hate the play. I hate what they had to go through.”

Many years and numerous plays later, Nichols left the agency in a pique and, less than a year later, returned quietly. During his absence, he missed both the office’s financial effectiveness and Peggy’s vivid personality. He needs her as an agent and as a source of comic material. Being represented by Peggy, he told me, is “rather like having a sort of extra marriage.” As we talked, he assumed her vocal and physi-

cal mannerisms, gradually turning his impersonation into a full music-hall routine—a scene from a Peter Nichols comedy. He reenacted a conference held in her office about the selling of the American rights to his musical “Poppy,” which has a score by Monty Norman. Nichols’ Peggy starts the conference by taking a thick contract and flinging it into the air. The pages fly all over her office. Then she begins to search for a reference in it to the composer. Picking up a page, she holds it flat against her eyes—the better to see it—and shouts, “That’s not it!” Then Peter as Peggy is down on the floor, sprawled on all fours. Orders start to flow: “Tell them we can’t allow that unless they give us fifteen per cent.” In the middle of the discussion, with the floor carpeted with pages of the contract, a secretary comes in and steps on “Poppy.” Recalling the scene and rejoicing in the theatricality, Nichols said, “Compared with that, every other agency is a bore.”

Nichols’ stage version of Peggy appeared in the West End in 1987, as the play agent in his autobiographical comedy “A Piece of My Mind”—a character he describes in the script as “volatile.” At one point, the agent is on the telephone, and the dialogue is almost an exact duplication—with a change of names—of a scene from life. In the actual version of the stage dialogue, Nichols was sitting in Peggy’s office as she told him of a conversation with one of her other authors. “Darling, I said to John Mortimer, you’re such a tart, you are just a *whore*. You are a harlot of literature. At least . . .” At that point, the telephone rang. Peggy picked up the receiver and, without missing a beat, finished her sentence right into the telephone: “. . . if you’re going to be a whore, before you open your legs make sure you’re properly paid. Hello,” she added to her caller, who happened to be the movie producer Sam Spiegel.

Nichols once sent his son to deliver a package to Goodwin’s Court. The boy went upstairs and said to Peggy, “This is from Peter Nichols.” She demanded, “Who are you?” He said, “I’m Peter Nichols’ son,” and, immediately softening her tone, she said, “Darling, come in, come in.” Then, with her usual sudden shift of voice and subject, she said to the boy, “I’ve just heard Hampton on the phone, darling. In tears! Because of what Graham Greene

said about his script.” He ran home to give his father the news.

Soon after I saw Nichols, I stopped by Peggy’s office to pick up a list of her clients. I told her I had read “A Piece of My Mind” and wished I could have seen it. She said that one of the problems with the London production had been the casting, especially that of the leading role—a playwright who resembles Nichols himself. I asked her if they had ever considered Albert Finney (who had starred in “Joe Egg” on Broadway) for the role. Without blinking, she called to her secretary, “Get me Peter Nichols,” and within seconds she was on the telephone with the playwright. I guessed that this was the first time she had talked to him in months; he must have been astounded at the sudden concern. She raised the idea of Finney for an American production of the play. Nichols expressed his doubts but offered other possibilities (Jack Lemmon, Nicol Williamson). Seizing the opportunity, he began talking about other unfulfilled projects, including an American production of “Poppy.” As the conversation went on, it was clear that the playwright was going to take full advantage of having his agent’s ear, and she, in response, was shooting off creative sparks. All it seemed to take was a reminder of Nichols to perk up her interest in his career.

When it came time to cast the role of Peggy in “Prick Up Your Ears,” the producer and director considered several choices—Maggie Smith, Coral Browne, Anna Massey—before settling on Vanessa Redgrave. Simon Callow, an actor and a close friend of Peggy’s, suggested that the only person really equipped to play Peggy was Peggy herself. In an earlier day, one

could have envisioned Katharine Hepburn in the role. Although Peggy declared that she had no interest whatever in the casting, David Hare felt that if she had had her choice she would have preferred someone gorgeous, like Catherine Deneuve. In order to study Peggy, Miss Redgrave visited her in her lair. Onscreen, Miss Redgrave captured some of Peggy’s flair, but to anyone who knows her the portrait was a superficial one, and was further hampered by the fact that the actress was far too tall. “I would have thought that to play Peggy you would have to have some sense of plowing a very deep groove through the room,” Hare says. One of the problems with early versions of the Alan Bennett script for the movie was that it depicted a Peggy with a maternal attitude toward her playwrights—in particular, toward Orton. Her authors dismiss the notion of a motherly Peggy. She is maternal only as Brecht’s Mother Courage is—in defending her family from outside assault.

Within the family, Peggy can be a scourge. The word “tact” is not in her active vocabulary; she has no time for tact, and her honesty can be devastating. She will not call a play promising if she is convinced that it is hopeless—information that she imparts in the most candid language. One needs a thick hide to survive as one of her authors, and she is well aware of the fright with which her playwrights await her verdicts. “They think I’m harsh—that I spread terror,” she says, adding, with a measure of pride, “They don’t like it, do they?” Her explanation for her attitude: “I see no reason one shouldn’t tell the truth. The truth is very, very painful. But it’s said to the playwright alone. I’m not a critic.” What is said remains “the secret of the office.” However, if she likes a play, no matter how controversial it may seem to others, she will stop at nothing to have it presented onstage in the best possible circumstances.



PEGGY carries a batch of manuscripts—by her authors and by potential clients—home from the office every night. She continues working after dinner, usually taking three plays to bed with her and spending perhaps two hours on each one. Often, she will fall asleep while reading, and then, waking up at five in the morning, she will go on reading where she left off. As soon



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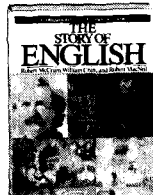
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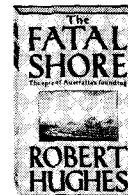
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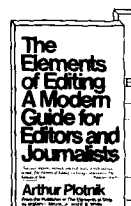
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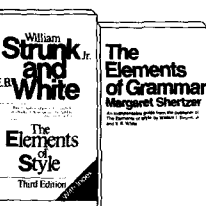
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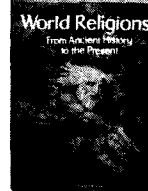
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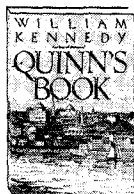
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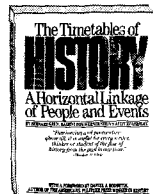
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as she has finished a play, she is eager to offer her assessment, and suggestions for improvement if they are warranted. In one popular, perhaps apocryphal, story, she telephoned—and awakened—Willy Russell, the author of the hugely successful “Educating Rita,” at six in the morning to tell him, “I’ve just read the most *dreadful* play by Willy Russell.” Interrupting, Russell supposedly said, “But, Peggy, this *is* Willy Russell.” Unfazed, she went on, “Yes, darling, it’s absolutely a dreadful play.” Although Russell denies the incident, others keep telling the story. In any case, her frankness can give playwrights sleepless nights—and also work-filled days, as they try to please her. When she read Hare’s “Wrecked Eggs,” a one-act comedy with an American setting, her response was “scathing,” Hare told me later. She thought the play was “full of cruelty and contempt,” and declared unequivocally, “If I’d received this through the post, I wouldn’t have taken the writer on.” At first, Hare was dismayed and totally resistant to making changes, but within a week he had decided that she was absolutely right, and, in response to her criticism, he rewrote the play. Subsequently, it was produced at London’s National Theatre, on a bill with another new Hare play, which she had liked from the start. Hare’s conclusion: “Peggy’s good opinion can’t be bought. That’s why, for a writer, she’s the best agent imaginable. She doesn’t care if she alienates anybody.”

Hare remembers his first encounter with her, some fifteen years ago. After having a number of productions in small theatres, he submitted a new play, “Knuckle,” to his agent, Clive Goodwin, who expressed no interest. At the suggestion of Hampton, an old school friend, Hare informally sent the script to Peggy. She was enthusiastic about it, regarding it as an important play. At once, she called Michael Codron and persuaded him to produce it in the West End. It is one of only two plays—the other was Orton’s “Entertaining Mr. Sloane”—in which Peggy invested her own money. “Knuckle” was a commercial failure, but it became the springboard for Hare’s prosperous career.

As for Hampton, he has had

no other agent. At Oxford in the nineteen-sixties, he was a playwriting prodigy. His first play, “When Did You Last See My Mother?,” was well received at the university. At the suggestion of Elizabeth Sweeting, who ran the Oxford Playhouse, he sent a copy to Margaret Ramsay. He received a quick reply, inviting him to see her the next time he was in London. The letter, written in 1966, ended with cautionary advice:

You will find that the work you write at Oxford is unlikely to be the best work you will write, and if you can manage to work slowly and steadily, developing all the time, you will go much further than if you try to run too fast and get labeled as a scrappy, immature author by the London critics. The criticisms they hand out at Oxford are always warm and more kindly than they give to a play in a professional theatre. Sometimes they do harm to authors by overpraising them too early, and three or four authors who made their debut at Cambridge a few years ago with very promising plays have now sunk like stones. It is really not just a matter of talent. It is a matter of character as well.

Sitting in his Notting Hill home twenty years later and reading the letter aloud to me, Hampton repeated the last two sentences and commented, “I suppose that’s her central belief—that what you have to attend to is not the talent, which will look after itself, but the character. It’s an unstable profession, and if you can’t deal with what it throws at you, you will be like those promising Cambridge authors who sank like stones.”

Several weeks after Hampton met



Peggy in her office, she informed him that his play was going to be presented at the Royal Court. “For me, she performed miraculously, almost at once,” he says, and she has never stopped performing for him. Despite her urging that he dramatize “Les Liaisons,” she has often discouraged him from spending his time writing stage adaptations and screenplays. She wants him to do more original work. As it happens, Hampton likes writing adaptations, and has gradually convinced Peggy that—for him, at least—it is a worthwhile activity. She has, in fact, been instrumental in arranging rewarding movie assignments, such as writing an adaptation of Conrad’s “Nostromo” with David Lean. Always, she has been adamant that he receive money for value. “She’s like a tiger when she feels anyone is being ripped off,” Hampton says. “She has a fierce feeling for her job and for her clients’ interest. She’s a very powerful defender of one’s rights. The reason that producers and film people put so much trust in her is that if they ring up and say ‘Can I have Hampton for such-and-such?’ and you’re not right for it she will say ‘I wouldn’t have him if I were you. It’s not his style of script at all. Have someone else.’ I’ve been in her office and heard her doing that. It can be shocking. Or she will say to a producer, ‘Well, darling, I don’t know why you want to do that play. It’s not very good.’”

Such honesty can lead to indiscretions. Some years ago, Ned Sherrin and Caryl Brahms contributed to the revue “Night Is for Delight,” which was tried out in Guildford. A number of London producers went up for the opening. During an intermission, one of the producers approached Sherrin and said, “Who is that extraordinary woman in the hat who is going around telling everyone not to invest in your show?” Sheepishly, Sherrin had to admit that the woman was his agent, Peggy Ramsay.

In contrast to Hampton and others, Caryl Churchill does not write adaptations, and is grateful that her agent rejects such offers for her. Miss Churchill says, “She’s always ringing me up and saying, ‘Caryl, this Hollywood producer wants you

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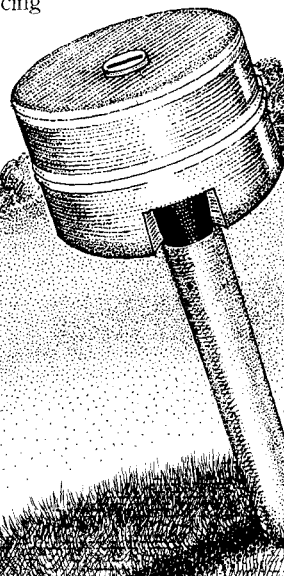
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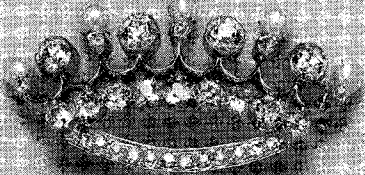
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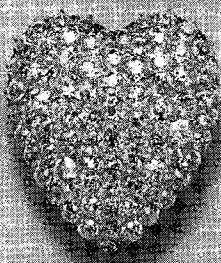
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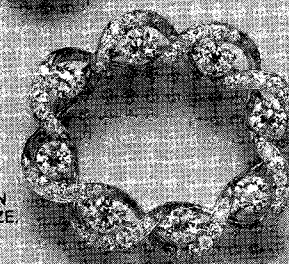
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to write a movie. You don't want to do that, do you, dear?" Peggy has always confirmed the kind of values I've had about theatre, which is that what matters is to write very well and what doesn't matter is to make money." It is not that Peggy is opposed to her authors' making money but that she is aware of the seductive aspects of success, and is firmly opposed to subsidies. From her point of view, subsidies, paid in advance, inhibit, and may even thwart, creativity. She says, "I've never come across a commissioned play that's any good" (an overstatement that excludes "Les Liaisons" and other plays by her authors). The principle is that the reward, if any, should come after the creation. "If the money is paid in advance," she says, "you get it for nothing, you spend it, and you have contempt for those who gave it to you." It is her heretical judgment that the *untalented* should be subsidized. Subsidy cannot hurt them, and they need the money to survive. The talented, she says, can work as stevedores or waiters, "and the talent will take care of itself." She adds, with a laugh, "Of course, authors are *furious* with me. They all want a free ride if they can get it."

When I suggested that a Guggenheim grant—or the nineteenth-century German version, if it had existed—might have extended the lightning-brief career of one of her favorites, Georg Büchner, she disagreed. In regard to art, she is fatalistic: one writes what one is destined to write. From her point of view, there are no unwritten or unproduced masterpieces. Büchner, like Orton, more than a century later, had written his life's work. For her, the emphasis is on encouraging playwrights to challenge themselves in their lifetimes. Her dictum to her authors: "Just go mad. Write anything. Don't say, 'I can't do this.' *Do it!* There isn't enough wildness, folly, richness, and daring." She urges them to "write over the precipice."

If Peggy finds someone who is daring, she is prepared to move mountains. Such a case was Joe Orton. It is one thing to accept Orton for what he is now considered to be—a modern equivalent of Oscar Wilde—and quite another to read his first full-length play, "Entertaining Mr. Sloane," in manuscript, as Peggy did, and recog-

nize its originality and producibility. Something similar might be said about David Rudkin's horrific tale of ritual murder, "Afore Night Come;" Caryl Churchill's plays of social outrage; Peter Barnes' apocalyptic comedies; and many other innovative works that she has discovered.

Peggy remembers having an argument with the critic W. A. Darlington, who insisted that one could judge a play only by seeing it onstage. She said to him, "Don't be silly. How do you think it gets on the stage? When you have it served up, it's *easy* to judge."

I asked her how she reads a play.

"You read it as if you were playing it in your head. You don't play the characters, you don't give it a set, you don't give it the actors' faces. But you read it at the same rhythm as it plays. You usually know in the first twenty minutes. Either you're caught up or you're not." Whether or not she is caught up, she reads the entire play. She does not walk out on a manuscript, always hoping that there will be a spark worth fanning.

"Her astuteness is an indefinable instinct," Ayckbourn says. "She found quite early that she could pick a good play as some people can pick a racehorse. She can tell the pedigree and calibre of a play before anyone else can. I remember her giving me 'What the Butler Saw' to read, and saying, 'What do you think of that?' I said it was the most outrageous piece of writing. She said, 'Well, yes, we'll do it, and it will be a very good play.' And it was an incredible success. A lot of agents grow old with their increasingly middle-aged clients. What is exciting—she's got that enviable thing of managing to link with the younger generation."

Peggy's concern about the theatre has always extended far beyond the confines of her agency. Frequently, and without remuneration, she has helped playwrights whom she does not represent, beginning with John Osborne, who has been a friend for many years. While she has been firm about not treading on his—or anyone else's—agent's territory, she has recommended Osborne for a number of commissions and assignments. In appreciation, he inscribed a copy of his autobiography, "A Better Class of Person," to Peggy as "a better class of agent."

Early in our conversations, Peggy told me about her encouragement of two other playwrights who were not her clients—Harold Pinter and Samuel Beckett. Both stories concerned Harold Hobson. She said that it was at her insistence that the critic went to see Pinter's first full-length play, "The Birthday Party," after its disastrous opening, in 1958. She said that at the suggestion of Michael Codron, the play's producer, she telephoned Hobson, who had missed the opening, and told him he should catch up with the play. Pinter himself was unaware of Peggy's intercession, but Hobson verifies the story in detail. "The first night of 'The Birthday Party' clashed with that of a new play by Bernard Kops, a writer of whom I then had some hopes," he told me. "I went to the Kops and missed the Pinter, which got universally damning reviews the next morning. So I decided not to bother with it, since that was a full week. But Peggy urged me to change my mind." Because of Peggy's prodding, he went to the Thursday matinée. "There were sixteen people in the audience," he said. "There was no applause after the first and second acts, and very little after the third." The play closed the night before Hobson's review appeared. In that review the critic said that "The Birthday Party" was the work of "the most original, disturbing, and arresting talent in theatrical London"—words that would not have been written if it had not been for Peggy Ramsay. Hobson's notice was the turning point in Pinter's career.

Peggy also played a supporting role in furthering the progress of "Waiting for Godot" in England. She had read the play before it was produced, and had expressed her enthusiasm to her friends, including Hobson. She lent him her copy. According to Peggy, she campaigned for Beckett during the opening-night performance of the Peter Hall production. Odd as the story sounds now, Hobson confirmed it: "At the hostile first night of 'Godot,' Peggy crept round to my seat at the end of the row and whispered, 'This is good, isn't it?' And it was, is, and ever will be." Again, it was Hobson's enthusiasm that laid the foundation for a new playwright's career. Peggy also tells of indirect involvement in the career of Tom Stoppard. She says that she saw "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead" at the 1966

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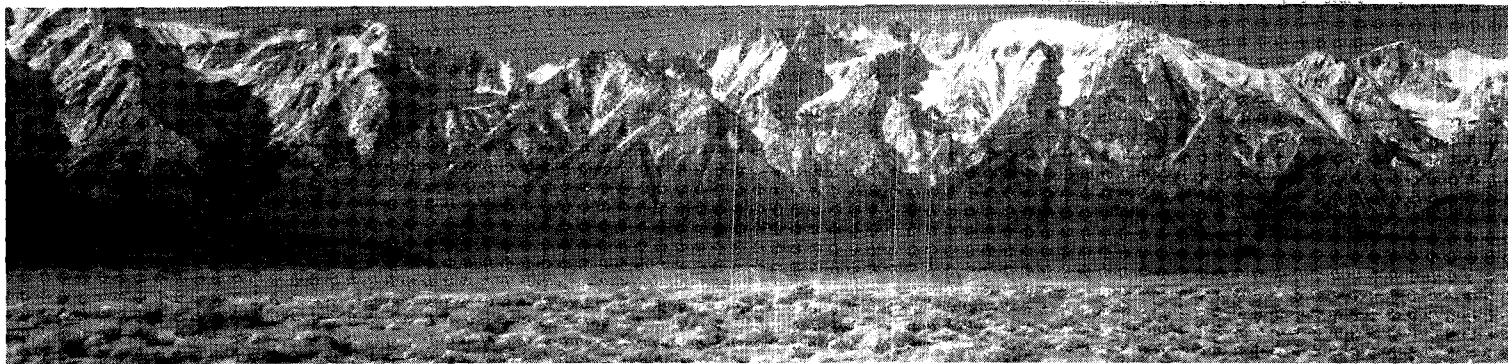
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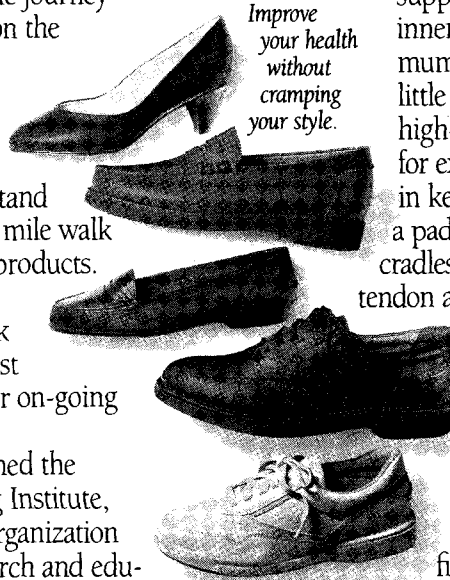
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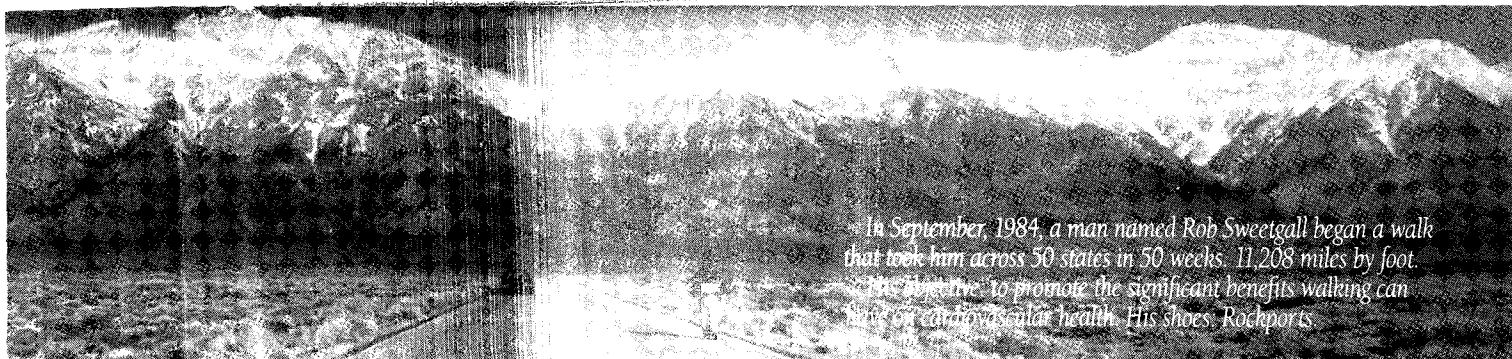
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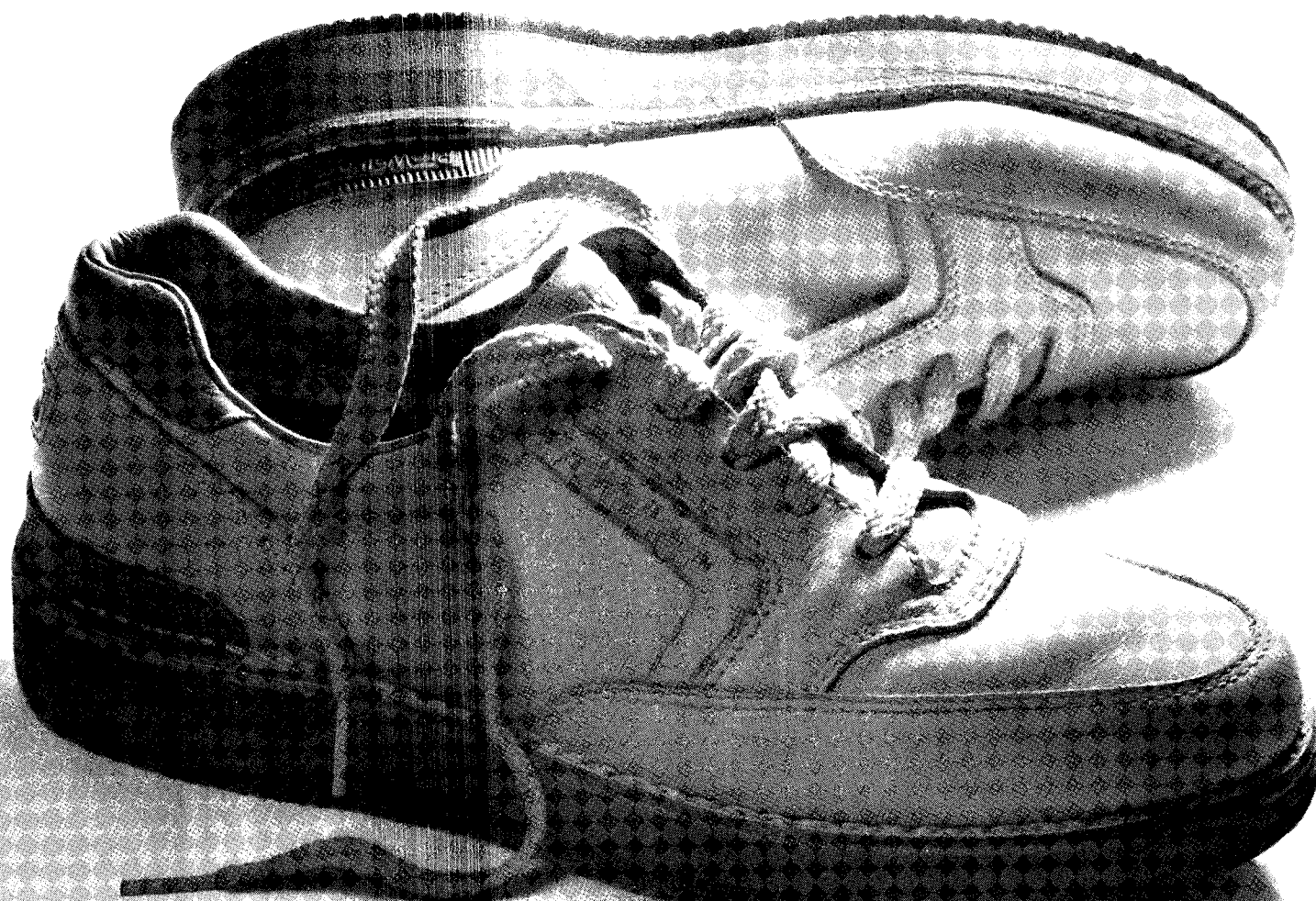
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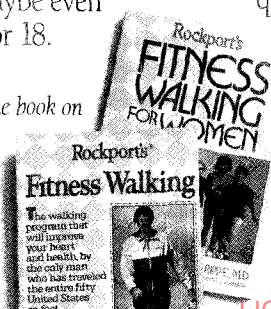


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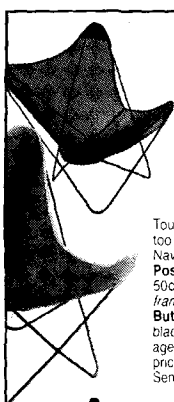
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Edinburgh Festival and got in touch with Kenneth Tynan, then literary manager of the National Theatre, and recommended that he come up and see it. Tynan did, and brought it to the National.

Before I talked to Peggy's authors, I assumed that many of them knew one another, and fantasized that there might even be a Peggy Ramsay Society, which met periodically for drinks at the nearby Garrick Club to swap anecdotes, or that the authors might sit around her office like French Impressionists posing for a group portrait by Henri Fantin-Latour. Whenever this idea was mentioned to one of the playwrights, he would laugh at its absurdity. There is in fact little direct communication among them, except for those few whose friendships preceded their representation by Peggy. Others know each other only fleetingly, if at all. John Mortimer likens the agency to a brothel: "You don't want to know about the other writers."

Ayckbourn remembers a day when he arrived at Peggy's office and was greeted by her ebullient announcement "I'm so glad you're here, because John's here."

Ayckbourn asked, "John who?"

She replied, "John Arden. I'm going to make a phone call. I'll leave you two together. I'm sure you will have masses to talk about." And with that she put Arden and Ayckbourn in her office and shut the door.

Ayckbourn recalls, "I had never met Arden before. He's a curiously silent sort of man. He was sitting in a corner fuming. He apparently had had some enormous problem with money. I was really the last person he wanted to see. I sat on the other side of the room. I knew for certain that he had never seen anything of mine, and I had never seen any of his plays. We sat there, I swear, in absolute silence for about a quarter of an hour. Then Peggy came bursting back in and said, 'Sorry to interrupt!' I've never seen two more relieved people."

Natural rivalries do spring up among her authors, and, occasionally, among authors' wives. A playwright will think that other authors are being favored, and sometimes, perhaps, the charge is true. Peggy tends to let her older authors go their own way. If they write a new play, they will show it to

her, but a new author has to be stimulated—there is a career to shape. In this regard, her approach is the opposite of that of the average agent, who spends more time with established authors than with newcomers. With all her authors she can be extraordinarily patient. Not all agents would have gone along with Caryl Churchill for more than twenty years as she wrote her seemingly specialized plays and made very little money—until her breakthrough, in 1981, with the New York production of "Cloud 9."

With some writers, such as Hare and Hampton, Peggy is in almost constant contact, though for different reasons. "Hare is very, very bright and very impatient with anybody who hasn't got his intellectual capacity," she says. "He relies on me for my intuition. He doesn't come for intellectual guidance, but to bounce things off me"—thoughts about casting as well as ideas for plays. He will also test plays, even scenes, in progress. Hampton, too, uses her as a sounding board, but he will generally present her with a finished manuscript and "wait with fear and trembling to see what she's going to say about it." She has less of a direct effect on Ayckbourn. Their conversations are about productions rather than text, though she wishes she could get him "to cut ten minutes from each of his plays," she says. With others, months can pass. Then she will suddenly put a client up for a movie or a television project—and she has many authors to choose from.



On a number of occasions, I have been in Peggy's office watching her at work—in other words, on the telephone—speaking to producers and directors as well as to playwrights. Although these conversations can seem quite informal, and the gossip does flow, they are directed toward a predetermined goal—to serve what she considers the best interests of her author. When "The Mission" was named best film at the Cannes film festival, in 1986, it reawakened Robert Bolt's career as a screenwriter. As a result, she received a call from Hollywood asking for Bolt's services in rewriting a script. Her response was simple and succinct: "Bolt does not share credit and does not rewrite other people's work." To a theatre producer who was apparently trying to shave the income of authors

she said, "For you, the bottom of the pile is the author. You spend all the money on the Royal Shakespeare Company, on the actors, and then you come back and say, 'Will you take two hundred a week?'—and we say we won't!" She would not budge from that position.

One afternoon, I walked into Peggy's office and found her reclining on her couch, stretched out like an odalisque. Holding her glasses close to her eyes, she was using them as a lorgnette while peering at recent notices of plays by her authors. When I entered, she sprang up and bounded across the room to her desk. Within minutes, tea was served, and Tom Erhardt, her mild-mannered assistant, appeared at the door to tell her that Lynne Meadow was on the telephone from the United States. As artistic director of the Manhattan Theatre Club, Miss Meadow has presented a number of works by Peggy's authors, and she wanted to produce Ayckbourn's "Woman in Mind," which had originally been scheduled for Broadway.

Peggy began chatting with Miss Meadow as if she had joined us for tea. She explained the intricacy of the ownership of the rights to the Ayckbourn play. "Alan doesn't have the rights," she said. "Michael Codron does, and he's leased them to Jimmy Nederlander, and Jimmy Nederlander's contract is unacceptable to us." Switching to the play itself, she said, "It needs extreme technical skill and an understanding of the human being and very, very good casting. There is no great problem except that you must not get the kind of designer Alan had here. It was an evening of unmitigated hell to the eyes. You had to close your eyes, because there was this terrible brick wall. What we don't want is hideosity—a dreadful sky cloth, topiary work behind and in front of the ghastly brick wall. It was staged"—by Ayckbourn himself—"in a very obvious way. There was no fluidity. The husband was all bad. All those ghostly people. I don't know who it was who said it, but if you play a miser you play it with generosity."

On the other end of the line, Miss Meadow had got a word in, proposing the name of a possible director for the New York production.

Peggy laughed. "Oh, that's that ghastly actor who has turned director. I

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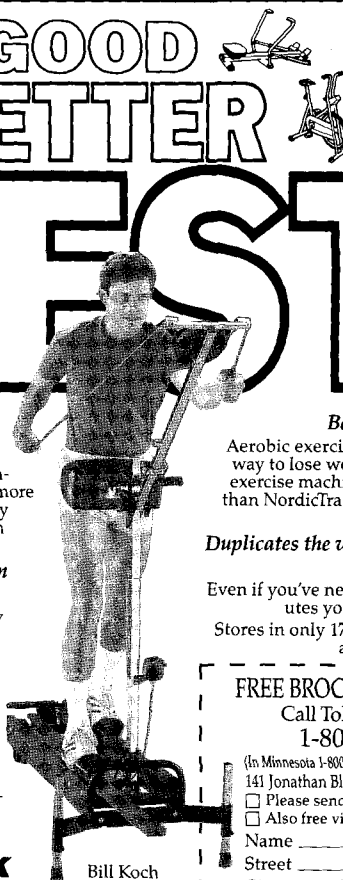
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know you think he's wonderful, but he's a boring actor and a dreadfully boring director. He seems to have found his feet in America—as long as he doesn't come and work here, so we don't have to suffer."

Miss Meadow said she might decide to direct the play herself.

Peggy responded, "It's your theatre, and if you want to cast yourself as director, dear, you have the power." She paused. "I'm sure you could do the play. It's very easy, as long as it's not sentimental or boring or too suburban. Try to make it surprising. Those bloody people in white in the London production! Don't just get wonderfully handsome papier-mâché figures. If you do everything that I've asked you *not* to do, we're non-speakers. Talk to Alan on the weekend. We have your number in New York and in the country. What's it like in the country? What do you do there?" As Peggy spoke, a secretary placed a message in front of her. Reading it, she continued talking into the telephone. "Who's Norman Beaton?" she shouted. Then she remembered. "Norman Beaton is a black actor. Well, there's no more, dear," she said to Miss Meadow. She laughed heartily, and added, "Do have a good production, dear."

In real life as well as in theatrical matters, Peggy is dauntless. This is

why, with equanimity, she can be privy to her authors' most indelicate secrets (while revealing very little of herself to them). She was not in the least put off by Joe Orton's sexual promiscuity. Noel Willman remembers when she told him of her first meeting with the playwright. "I've met this *fascinating* young man, and he's so talented," she said. "What he brought me was no good. I said, 'Go and write something else.' But he's so extraordinary. And you know what? He's so clean!" Willman says, "I thought that was a real Peggyism—to talk about someone whose life was of such squalor and so sordid as so *clean*. She meant that his shirt was always glistening and his face was scrubbed and shining. It was true. When I met Orton, he was absolutely pristine."

Christopher Hampton says about his agent's open mind, "She wouldn't care if you were having an affair with three Egyptian dwarfs. And she wouldn't necessarily mind if you were an alcoholic, provided it didn't interrupt your work." On the other hand, she can be critical if she feels that a client is settling into complacency—if he is not having adventures (romantic or otherwise), or even if he is happily married, as both Hampton and Howard Brenton are. Of Brenton's home life she once said, "He's like

a hippopotamus wallowing in mud."

Among her authors, Edward Bond is one of the most austere and formidable. Naturally, she has tried to lighten him up. After he had his first London production, she said to him, "For God's sake, stop taking yourself so seriously," and suggested, "Get yourself a little red sports car and drive up and down the King's Road with a blonde." To the astonishment of others, Bond actually took her advice. "It was a wonderful sight to see Edward in a little red sports car with a blonde, with her hair blowing in the wind," Peggy said to a friend, adding, "And now he lives in Cambridgeshire with his wife, and he's a stick-in-the-mud. If only he would get back into that little red sports car!" One can imagine what she would have suggested to Samuel Beckett if he had been her client.

It is no coincidence that most of Peggy's authors are men. That also happens to be true of a number of other women agents, especially in the United States (though they handle far fewer authors). Similarly, women playwrights tend to have male agents. Peggy's agency is almost a men's club, with Caryl Churchill, Ann Jellicoe, and several other women as "honorary" members. She declares that the unbalanced ratio simply reflects the fact that there are more male playwrights. But the truth lies deeper than that: she prefers male playwrights, just as she prefers the company of men. She likes being with them, and they like being with her. Peggy is a man's woman. "She loves nothing better than going out to lunch or dinner with one of her male writers," Ayckbourn says. "She thrills to it, and she's great fun to be with. In the nicest sense, she's quite a sexy lady. The people she usually gets on least well with are strong, self-centered actresses." In that sense, she is protective of her authors. She does not want anyone—such as a star or a director—to take advantage of them. Similarly, she can have mixed feelings about authors' wives or lovers, if she thinks their demands are too great.

Most of Peggy's closest friends have been men (the actress Elisabeth Bergner was one exception), and, by design, they have been outside her agency. For all her concern for her authors, she is cautious about how close she gets to them. She once said to me that she did not regard her authors as her friends—

a statement that I found surprising. When it was quoted to them, they greeted it with astonishment. Some of them consider her a very good friend. Hampton said, "If she says her writers are not her friends, then I don't know who her friends are." Her point is that for true friendship one should be free of professional entanglements. "It would be presumptuous to say that my authors were friends," she explains. "We have a relationship. If I weren't an agent, I might say they were friends, but I wouldn't have met them if I hadn't been an agent. You don't take advantage of being an agent." She added, with a smile, "All you do is to take ten per cent."

Peggy indicated that she had always been scrupulous about not mixing romance and business. One day, she said, "All my love affairs were with composers and executants"—meaning musicians—and she elaborated, "Composers, conductors, great violinists, great pianists." I had to laugh as the list got longer and longer. She said that at one point in her life "the world of music was entirely my private world." David Hare reports that she told him she had once been in love with a violinist who was so devoted to her that he could play only when he knew she was in the audience. "I had to go to every concert he gave," Peggy said. "But let me tell you, the violin repertoire is remarkably small."

She is a woman of great aplomb, even in the most ticklish circumstances, but Ayckbourn recalls one occasion when she was at least momentarily at a loss for words. He and Peggy and Tom Erhardt flew to Hamburg several years ago for a German production of Ayckbourn's "Relatively Speaking." While they were there, they were taken by their German host to a Reeperbahn night club to see a sexually explicit show. "I had never seen a show like it," the playwright said. "Tom was going 'Oh, my God!' and for all of five minutes Peggy's mouth was dropped open. But she recovered and made comments like 'This is rather fun, isn't it? Oh, it's like a little rep company. You begin to recognize them. Charming the way they do it.' And after a while she began to talk as if we were all watching a rather interesting Fringe production at the Bush Theatre rather than watching a lot of people having intercourse."

Illustrating Peggy's power of quick

recovery, Simon Callow tells about the time the two of them were in a poetry bookshop in which there was a statue of Freud behind the counter: "Peggy, who is very shortsighted, went up to the statue and said 'Excuse me' and asked for something. When there was no answer, she said, 'Is he deaf? Is he completely deaf?' I said, 'Peggy, it's a statue, not a person,' and she said, 'Good heavens, how extraordinary! Not a very attractive woman, is it?'"

Peggy's attitude toward death is strange and even, one might say, insensitive. David Hare remembers her calling him at seven-thirty one morning to tell him that David Mercer had died in Israel. Because he had not been Mercer's closest friend, Hare asked her whom else she had called. She explained that he was the first, because she needed some information about what to tell the Israelis to do with Mercer's body. She asked Hare, "Didn't you write a play once about how to get a body back from a foreign country? What's the procedure?" The Hare play was "Plenty," and he now suggested that, as in the play, someone get in touch with the British Embassy. "She can't admit the fact of death," Hare says. "And she can be cold-blooded about it."

IN considering her own life, Peggy refuses to linger on the past or to dream about missed opportunities. She regards herself as a woman of the present, who faces each day and each new play with a sense of adventure. As she tells the story of her life—a relatively brief story from an otherwise voluble woman—much of what has happened to her has been fortuitous. If she is asked to talk about her past, she says she would prefer to be "mysterious and diffident." Some of her authors were surprised to learn, when she was interviewed on the radio by Ned Sherin, that she had been married. They would be more surprised to learn that she is not sure, or is not saying, whether she was ever divorced, or even whether her husband is still alive. Attempting to explain her attitude, Noel Willman, who has known her for more than forty years, says, "She is like somebody who is totally *déraciné*. She doesn't wish to remember her background. It's as if she had been plunked down in the wrong place—as if there had been a mistake in the dispatch office." David Hare observes

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that she has "murdered her past."

Reconstructed, her early life begins to resemble that of Beryl Markham: a self-sufficient childhood in Africa; a communion with nature and, in Peggy's case, with literature. At this point, facts blur, beginning with the date of her birth. (She is somewhere around eighty, but could pass for a dozen years younger.) Christopher Hampton suggested that to trigger her reminiscences I mention "ostrich feathers," as a possible Proustian key. In a conversation with Peggy, I did just that. Pouncing on the words, she said, "What about them?" Primed by Hampton, I said I had heard that her father once owned an ostrich farm. Sounding like Isak Dinesen reflecting on her life in the Ngong Hills, she gradually revealed her family history.

Peggy's paternal grandfather, who was Jewish, fled from a pogrom (either in Poland or in Russia) in the mid-nineteenth century. While many of his fellow-émigrés sought sanctuary in the United States, he went to South Africa, and there managed to buy a farm in the Karroo region of Cape Province. Her father, John Venniker, was a physician who practiced on London's Harley Street. When his father died, Dr. Venniker inherited enough money for him and his wife to travel around the world. Their daughter, Margaret, was born in Molong, not far from Sydney, Australia. Subsequently, the Vennikers moved to South Africa to take over the family farm. Peggy remembers the farm as "beautiful and barbaric." It was devoted to ostriches and, in limited numbers, Arabian horses. To feed the ostriches, the fields were planted with alfalfa, which provides her with a vivid childhood image: snow-white ostriches on an expanse of purple alfalfa. When her grandfather willed the farm to her father, he believed, with some justification, that his son was improvident. A clause in the will stipulated that in order to keep the farm the heir would have to maintain an exact number of ostriches (Peggy's remembered figure is ten thousand)—that if one ostrich died it would have to be replaced immediately. Peggy's father was young and handsome and, apparently, a ladies' man. As anticipated, he became an absentee owner, while he was in charge of a tuberculosis hospital in Pretoria. Eventually, Dr. Venniker went to court and broke his father's

will, and was able to sell the farm, which was then subdivided. Remembering her childhood home, Peggy says, "It was rather like Isak Dinesen's house in the film of 'Out of Africa.'" Her mother imported all the furniture, silks, curtains, and carpets from London. "It was absolutely incongruous and utterly English—a great drawing room, with all the silver and bound volumes of *Punch*, in the heart of the veldt." She says she never felt a sense of family. Her father was seldom at the farm, and her mother was engaged in social activities. Her brother (now a doctor in Durban) was twelve years younger. "I had holidays *totally* alone," she recalls. "I read, walked, and rode—and I certainly didn't share my ideas or feelings with anybody."

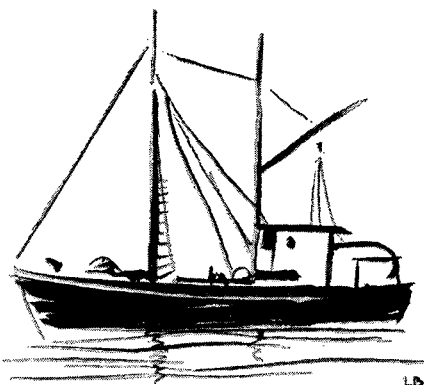
Peggy's happiest memories were literary or bucolic: she read Proust at twelve and rode ostriches as well as horses. Remembering the Karroo, she grows wistful. "It was *bliss* at the time for a child to be brought up on a great farm like that," she says. The farm was near the town of Oudtshoorn, reachable by horse and buggy along a narrow road canopied by thick, mimosa-like foliage. Oudtshoorn itself was a kind of fairyland in the eyes of children. The houses, built by European immigrants like her grandfather, were "absolute follies," Peggy recalls—Gothic and gewgawed, "with turrets and towers, cupolas and balconies, great drawing rooms, and a dozen bedrooms and sunken bathrooms in each house."

Culturally isolated as a child, Peggy never saw a film or set foot in a museum, and rarely went to the theatre. When she stayed with a schoolmate in Johannesburg, she saw "rubbishy plays with touring actors." With her parents, she sometimes travelled, visiting both Japan and Europe. At one point,

she attended school in France. Pretty and flirtatious, by the time she was sixteen she had her suitors, including a pilot who sounds in her description as dashing as Denys Finch Hatton. For all one knows—and for all Peggy is revealing—he may have *been* Denys Finch Hatton. In his plane, he would swoop down over her home and drop love letters. On one occasion, possibly when he was delivering the mail, he crash-landed and was injured. Peggy, eager to be with the pilot in the hospital, was discovered crawling through a hospital window. Worried about their daughter's infatuation with an older man—and a daredevil—her parents sent her away, to the university in Grahamstown. At first, she studied English; then she switched to biology and zoology; and she quickly became romantically involved with a professor of psychology named Norman Ramsay. He was also much older than she was, and, she says, came from an aristocratic English family. Professor Ramsay proposed to her, and, faced with the alternative of returning to her family, she decided to marry him and move to England.

By the time they were married, around 1930, she had fallen in love with another man—nameless in the Peggy chronicle. The first night of the marriage, as she tells it, she faked frigidity. David Hare calls this "the fainting-virgin story," and it is one of Peggy's favorites. The fact that her husband appeared to accept her frigidity without pressing the issue made her question his knowledge of psychology. It may also have been her first realization that she might have acting talent. Several weeks after arriving in England (the length of the marriage varies according to the telling), she left him. With only ten pounds to her name and no foreseeable income, she took a room in London. As she describes it, she never looked back—and never again saw Professor Ramsay.

During the brief marriage, Peggy had begun taking singing lessons. When she decided to leave her husband, she told her singing teacher that, for financial reasons, she would have to discontinue studying. The sympathetic teacher taught her Elisabeth's greetings, from "Tannhäuser," and suggested that she use it to audition for the Carl Rosa Opera Company. She did, and was accepted as a member of the chorus, and so began her show-busi-



ness career. "I just had a very noisy voice," she says disparagingly. "I screamed at the audition." Three weeks after ending her marriage, she was sent to Swansea, where the company was on tour, and she started to work her way up in opera. "It wasn't that I was good but that the rest were absolutely *appalling*," she says. One point in her favor was that she was svelte—"the only very slim person in the company."

On tour, Peggy learned that Ivor Novello's theatre company needed an understudy for Mary Ellis in the leading role in a touring production of a play. She switched from opera to drama, and within two weeks, with very little acting experience, was filling in for the star. She appeared to have a natural talent for acting. When Prince Littler, the producer, offered her a contract to sing in a series of operas, she rejected it in favor of remaining in the theatre. Joining a company in Cork, she played a nurse in "The Amazing Dr. Clitterhouse." Her character had to dress wounds and open and close doors—stage business that proved disconcerting to the fledgling actress. She "tottered" through the role and was nearly fired. However, after the company produced "Pride and Prejudice," it—and Peggy along with it—became the toast of Cork. At the end of the season, Peggy recalls, the producer came to her dressing room with a proposition: if she would move in with him, she could have her choice of roles. "He served up all the great roles. I said, 'But I don't like you. I don't want to live with you. Thanks awfully, and I'm going.' I quit and came back to London. They engaged another actress, and she accepted the proposition. She played Marguerite Gautier and St. Joan and was such a disaster they had to close the theatre."

Gradually, Peggy established a reputation for playing "very, very pathetic characters"—a fact that should astonish those who have confronted her in contract negotiations. One of her most challenging roles was as "a shabby, unwanted elderly woman" in a Noël Coward play. Her performance drew an appreciative response from the audience and, one evening, from the author himself, who, she says, came backstage and told her she was going to be a great

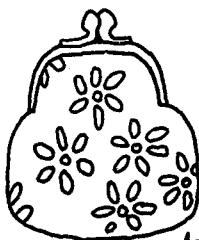
actress—a remark that she received with skepticism. At one point, she was hired by Hugh Hunt and William Devlin for a new theatre company in Cambridge. Within a month, Devlin, a noted Shakespearean actor, informed her that she was to play Lady Macbeth opposite him. (His last previous co-star in the play had been Peggy Ashcroft.) To Peggy Ramsay, the thought was terrifying, and the situation was complicated by the fact that she and Devlin were having an affair. "That might

have made him think I was a better actress than I was," she says. The two of them continued rehearsals in their bedroom. When I reminded her that this was an old theatrical tradition among such acting couples as Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne, Peggy said, "Well,

she didn't play Lady Macbeth." For her, she said, it was "two or three weeks of unmitigated hell," and she added, "The truth is, I wasn't very good. The only easy thing was the mad scene."

In 1945, after the season ended in Cambridge, Hunt and Devlin were recruited by Laurence Olivier and Ralph Richardson, the co-directors of the Old Vic, to create the Bristol Old Vic. Peggy joined them as an actress and as an assistant to Hunt. Among the others in the company were Noel Willman, Pamela Brown, and Yvonne Mitchell. Though Peggy occasionally performed in small roles, she spent most of her time casting and working backstage. When there were disputes between the actors and the management, she acted as conciliator. Willman recalls that the company was not a happy one. On the job, Peggy learned a great deal about theatre production and management, and lost her interest in performing. Looking back on Bristol, she is somewhat regretful that she didn't take the opportunity to become a director. She says, "I thought then that women should assist men as directors. I had this romantic idea: I wanted to build men into great directors."

At Bristol, Peggy and Willman shared an apartment over a pub near the theatre. Both left after a year. Peggy moved to London and lived in a Hampstead studio. In this transitional period, she chose a life of not always genteel poverty. Peggy, in describing the world of the novelist Jean Rhys,



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whose theatrical agent she later became, says that it paralleled her own experience at this time: "Jean simply allowed life to live her. Because she had nothing else to do, she would go on tour in a tatty little play. She had no plans *ever*, no ambitions. She began writing because she didn't know what to do next. She wrote by chance. She wrote a short story and somebody published it and somebody else said 'You're a writer.' She didn't conduct her life. I think many women at that time were like that. It was as if life were a river and you just put yourself in a little boat and let the river take you." In such a fashion Peggy became an agent. As far as her life was concerned, she says, "I never planned anything." (She warmed to Jean Rhys as a person but was not enamored of her writing, and has characterized her books as "the quintessence of the limitations of femininity.")

During the next few years, Peggy worked for various producers and managers, reading plays for Peter Daubeny, and, at one point, running the Kew Theatre, in the Chiswick section of London. Among the plays she presented was one by Agatha Christie. The producer Peter Saunders moved the Kew production into a commercial engagement. Dame Agatha saw it, and liked it so much that she told Saunders he could do all her plays. As a result, he produced "The Mousetrap," the longest-running play of all time—for which Peggy therefore bears a marginal responsibility.

While she was advising another producer, E. P. Clift, five of her selections became West End hits. When Campbell and Dorothy Christie, the co-authors of one of the five, "His Excellency, Carrington, V.C.," realized that she was making no commission from their play, they suggested that she might become an agent. She was, said the Christies, "the best judge in this country of an unperformed play." In the early nineteen-fifties, financed by them with a thousand pounds, she moved into a tiny office, one flight up, on Goodwin's Court, off St. Martin's Lane. She had two small rooms, a minimum of furniture, and no authors. Just before she became an agent, she wrote a play—to see if she could do it. "I didn't think it was at all good," she says. Some time later, an author

brought her a play on the same subject. "It wasn't good, but it was better than mine," she says, and she adds that she was able to get it produced.

Peggy began her career as an agent during a time of theatrical upheaval. With "Look Back in Anger," in 1956, John Osborne had given the English theatre an entirely new and startling vision—a working-class play that accosted the audience on a visceral level. "John broke the mold," Peggy says. "We owe everything to him, and I'm devoted to him." Buoyed by Osborne's breakthrough, other playwrights emerged, writing in a diversity of styles—naturalistic, absurdist, epic. At first, however, things were quiet at Goodwin's Court. Setting up shop as an agent is not quite like putting out a doctor's shingle, which might at least bring one a few emergency cases. On call, Peggy waited. Since there were always more authors than agents, some gradually began soliciting her patronage. From the start, she was selective—one might say elitist—for she had decided that there would be no point in taking on just any client. If she was going to be serious about her profession—if, indeed, her profession allowed for seriousness—she would have to express herself through her choice of authors.

When I asked Peggy what it would have been like if she had been an agent before Osborne broke the mold—at a time when Coward and Terence Rattigan ruled the British theatre empire—she said, "Wouldn't it be boring!"

Despite the fact that her previous play-reading had been for traditional producers, she intuitively tuned in to newer, fresher voices. Peggy began her career with the avant-garde; namely, Eugène Ionesco, whose work was brought to her by his French representative. Peggy became his agent in England. Captivated by such plays as "The Lesson" and "The Bald Soprano," she arranged for their production at the Arts Theatre, beginning in 1955. Though the agent and the author were close, he was increasingly jealous of the fact that she also represented Pinget and Adamov, his rivals in France. "He just couldn't bear it," she said, and he eventually left her. But, just as she established Ionesco in England, he helped to establish her as an agent.

Peggy's first important English dis-

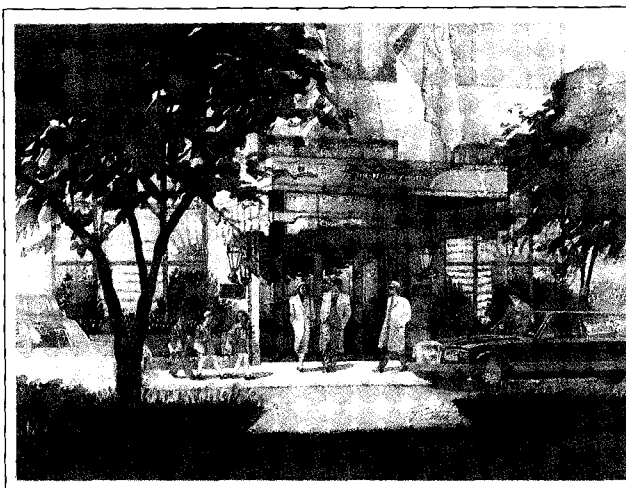


covery was Robert Bolt—a provincial schoolmaster who wrote radio plays. On the strength of one scene in one of those plays, she sent Bolt a letter suggesting that he might have a talent for the stage. Reading that letter, Bolt recalls, “I went over the moon.” He was so stimulated by Peggy’s enthusiasm that he wrote five plays in quick succession, all of which she rejected. Then he wrote a domestic drama called “Flowering Cherry.” A draft was sitting on her desk when the producer Frith Banbury stopped by to ask if she had any plays he might be interested in doing. Explaining that Bolt’s new work was unfinished, she showed it to him anyway. He took the script and, to her amazement, called several days later to say that Ralph Richardson and Celia Johnson were going to act in it at the Haymarket. Once again, Bolt went over the moon. Because he was still teaching school, Peggy was, in his absence, the watchdog during the out-of-town tryout. The play, a hit in London in 1957, initiated the theatrical partnership of Robert Bolt and Peggy Ramsay. Three years later, he tried to turn a radio play about Sir Thomas More into a stage play. Peggy expressed her dissatisfaction with it as a conventional historical drama, and recommended that he incorporate, as Thomas Mann did in “Death in Venice,” a narrator-like figure. The result was the character of the Common Man, through whose eyes we see the martyrdom of More. “A Man for All Seasons” opened doors for Bolt to a flourishing career as a playwright and screenwriter (“Lawrence of Arabia,” “Doctor Zhivago”). Years later, he said, “Without Peggy, I could not have done one-half of what I have done.”

Along with Bolt, among Peggy’s early clients were John Whiting and James Saunders, and ever since, says Saunders, “She has been a fact of my artistic life.” In several years, she developed what David Hare calls “a genuine writers’ agency.” Her emergence in that field paralleled George Devine’s development of the Royal Court as a writers’ theatre. It is no coincidence that many of her writers (including Arden, Bond, and Hampton) had their work performed at the Court.

When Peggy became an agent, she did not own a television set. She bought one in order to learn about the medium, and, while maintaining a healthy dis-

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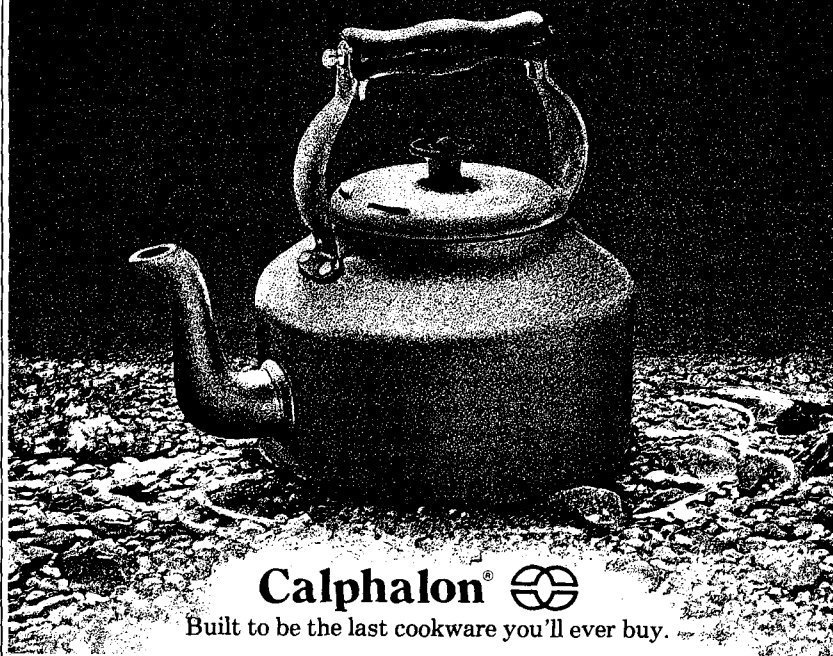


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respect for it as a proper area for dramatists, she began selling television plays. Her most successful author in that line was David Mercer. A failure as a novelist, "destitute and totally neurotic," he was taken on by Peggy, who urged him to write plays, especially for television. "When Mercer first came to see me, he was so frightened and shy he could hardly creep through the door," she recalls. Under her guidance he wrote "The Generations," a highly popular trilogy of plays, for the BBC, and it led to his career as one of England's most admired television writers. "She was a wonderful agent for Mercer, because he needed somebody he could fight with, someone who would incite him to keep working," Hampton says. "He wrote a colossal number of plays—thirty-seven television plays and a dozen stage plays. It all poured out." Mercer was known for a serious, even portentous, approach, but one night he regaled Peggy with amusing tales about the absurdities of his own life. She was so charmed by the stories that she suggested he forsake his usual solemnity and write something comic. The result was "A Suitable Case for Treatment," which was later filmed, to great acclaim, as "Morgan!"

Mercer was glamorized by his fame, but, Peggy says, in his failure "he had acquired the solace of drink." He was one of several authors of hers who "survived failure but were destroyed by success." Even as she emphasizes character over careerism, she leads authors to financial reward. When she reflects on the self-destructive streaks of writers like Mercer, it is with a sense of responsibility as well as with a sense of regret. "In the beginning, you have to work enormously hard for an author, because it's incredibly difficult for a totally unknown person to get a play produced," she says. "Once the talent has been discovered, it is strong enough to stand on its own feet. All one hopes is that he's not going to get spoiled by success. As soon as an author is terribly successful, like Tennessee Williams or Terence Rattigan, he cuts himself off and loses touch with a source of his art. I remember saying to Osborne, 'You're always in a motorcar. Don't you ever walk? Don't you ever go on the tube?' He said, 'Why should I?' I said, 'Well, then, how can you write?' " Her advice to Osborne and others is "You must go directly to life, just as Cézanne did."

By all odds, Peggy's most profitable and durable discovery is Ayckbourn. In common with most of his colleagues, he joined her agency at the outset of his career. In 1963, Peggy went up to Stoke on Trent with the producer Peter Bridge to see a play by an actor turned playwright. Bridge was planning to produce the playwright's work in London. Peggy liked the piece, which was mostly in mime, and agreed to look after the playwright. Ayckbourn recalls that the first thing his new agent did was "to turn around and renegotiate my contract with Peter Bridge in my favor." Less than three years later, "Relatively Speaking," produced by Bridge at the Duke of York's, became a commercial success, and began a long streak of Ayckbourn money-makers.

From the beginning, Ayckbourn was a bit self-conscious about being in Peggy's camp, as a commercial writer surrounded by all "the new young radical lions." He says, "I don't think she quite knew what she had taken on. She's not in the market for West End comedy writers. What happened, I think, is that I grew into being a Peggy Ramsay writer. I certainly had an agent who did not encourage me to go for the obvious glittering rewards. Neither did she say, 'You must write plays heavily steeped in social messages.' She obviously applauded and encouraged the plays of mine that got a little harder and a little tougher." This encouragement was echoed by the critics: they gradually began to accept Ayckbourn as much more than a writer of boulevard comedies.

AS the number of Peggy's authors increased and her business prospered, there was no commensurate expansion of her staff. She still runs a vest-pocket-size agency. Tom Erhardt, who is American, joined her in 1971. As her closest aide, he negotiates contracts. Besides Peggy and Erhardt, there are only an accountant, a woman in charge of publication, and a secretary—a tiny group alongside mammoth agencies. Still cozily ensconced on Goodwin's Court, the Margaret Ramsay agency looks homespun. One could imagine the building housing antiques or rare books but not, as it does, a booming center of international theatre. Outwardly, the office is a study in chaos, with the telephone incessantly ringing, people coming and going, and

THE NEW YORKER

Peggy shouting through her open door for a manuscript, a letter, or a phone number. There is, of course, an internal order. The agency is cost-efficient and time-efficient, with an adaptability to the earning power of the client whether he is a promising writer on the Fringe or a major television dramatist.

One day while I was sitting in Peggy's office, Erhardt brought in the Ayckbourn account books—a small library of ledgers—and, as I watched, went zooming around the world with the author. One play alone, "Season's Greetings," was done recently in Bahrain, Dubai, Jakarta, Abu Dhabi, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Leeds, and Northern Ireland. As Erhardt reeled off the places, Peggy said, "When we first took on Ayckbourn, we would earn ten pounds a year." Now, thirty plays later, he is a multimillion-dollar industry.

As Erhardt demonstrated the global nature of the agency's business, I could sense that Peggy was only moderately interested. Of far more consequence to her was the question of art and how to inspire her authors to write—and to take the time to write—major plays. In that regard, Hare says, her model is Ibsen: "What she wants is a feeling of a totally distinctive person behind a play, distinguished by the integrity of his suffering. She wants the skill to be disguised, and not bleeding all over the stage." Peggy's point of view is that "theatre caters to people's deepest need, their subconscious, their unhappiness, their limitation." It is, she says, the playwright's duty to be compassionate, and for her playwrights she acts as a kind of moral force impelling them toward that goal. Ayckbourn, for one, has taken note of her precepts and offers a sampling: "If you take a lot out of the theatre, then put a lot back in. It's good for your soul." And "Beware of believing your own publicity." And "Be generous with your talent—and be prepared to throw away the old brown script."

Asked if a writer is nurtured by his demons, Peggy responds, "I think he is often nurtured by his vices. Thomas Mann said that to write ineffably well you've got to roll in the gutter, to go into the lower depths. I like people for their faults. I don't mean spitefulness or pettiness. That is simply disgusting—that people should behave in a way that is hurtful to themselves and to their careers. But, for God's sake, who

wants to like a person for his virtues? I don't mind authors' behaving badly as long as it makes their plays good. Mercer and Orton were both diabolical. They were outcasts. Mercer learned to behave well in public, but he was a dark creature. Orton was a sort of gutter-snipe who moved into the theatre." She adds, "It's very depressing having these dead authors—Orton, Mercer, Jean Rhys. You make a lot of money for them, but it's no fun. It's the nephews"—she pronounced the word "nevews"—"who get the money. I don't think Ibsen had nephews."

DESPITE several recent illnesses, Peggy remains indefatigable. Awake at seven-thirty, if not earlier, she has breakfast in her Chelsea home, which she shares with a cat named Button. Like her authors, the cat "just decided to join" her. She usually takes the underground to work, and spends a full day at her desk, and in the evening will occasionally go to a concert or the theatre. After she has seen a play, she refuses to go backstage to talk to the actors—a sign of the distance she generally keeps from performers. One of her closest friends is, as it happens, the actor Simon Callow. They met eight years ago through Martin Sherman, one of her playwrights, and immediately discovered shared interests in art, literature, and music. "The meeting was a blur of time and excitement," Callow says. "I had this impression that she was all air and fire."

About a week later, a case of vintage wine arrived at the stage door of the National Theatre, where Callow was appearing as Mozart in Peter Shaffer's "Amadeus." There was no name on the case. The press office investigated, and Callow recalls, "Within two minutes, Peggy was on the phone saying, 'But of course I left it for Simon Callow. I would have thought you would realize that.' I phoned Peggy and said this was absolutely extraordinary. She said, 'Don't you realize what day it was last Wednesday—Molière's birthday! I was passing Fortnum & Mason's and thought how sad that no one in England would drink the health of Molière on his birthday, and I thought there was one person who might, and, of course, I sent you the wine.'" Though they see each other frequently and live only several streets away from each other, part of their relationship is epistolary. They correspond, just as if

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they were living in pre-telephonic Victorian days. Peggy is a faithful correspondent with other people as well, and when she types a letter herself she certifies that fact with the word "self-tipped."

Sometimes Callow is so anxious for her to read his letter that he carries it to her door. He explains, "It's a friendship that is totally bound by and built on Art—I suppose with a capital 'A.'" In the course of their friendship, Callow became a writer as well; his writing career began with an article for the *Evening Standard* about his experiences acting in J. P. Donleavy's "The Beastly Beatitudes of Balthazar B." Callow recalls, "Peggy said, 'Well, I better read it, hadn't I?' She took her glasses off, and she read the manuscript with her nose on the page. There's the sort of physical passion of reading, murmuring things like 'My God, how dreadful!' Then she looked up and said, 'Did you mean this to be so boring? Ohhh, Goddd, noooo! It's no good, is it? Why don't you just write it the way you write your letters to me?' I had tried to be clever. It was a brilliant piece of advice." He rewrote the article and gave it back to her.

She said, "Well, dear, it's very good. Why is it better?"

Callow said, "Well, I did what you said to do."

"Reeaally? That helped?"

Analyzing her reaction, he says, "There's something magnificently impersonal about Peggy. It's as if what you wrote had nothing to do with you at all. It's as if you said, 'Look, Peggy, I found this in a junk shop,' and she says, 'Well, that's rubbish.' It couldn't offend you. It could *shatter* you, but it couldn't offend you."

Peggy recalls that she simply told him to remove every single adjective. "You know how gushy actors are," she says.

While Callow was acting and directing in Santa Fe, Peggy, without his knowledge, got in touch with a publisher, who decided to commission him to write a book. Though Callow was surprised at the suggestion, he agreed to it, and the consequent book, "Being an Actor," was acclaimed, opening up a rewarding second career for him. Peggy became his agent while, in this one case, remaining a friend. In common with her

playwriting clients, he now sees her in agent action. "Being with Peggy is a very bracing and rather alarming experience, like being in *Outward Bound*," he says. "She is a great literary agent because she has an inherently dramatic mind. Peggy sees everything in the most vivid oppositions. She's a great believer in passion, and in a kind of burning up of obstacles to creating extraordinary work. To her, every act of art or life must be an imperative or it's no use at all. Her great saying is 'Do everything that you want to do,



but always pick up the bill afterward.' What she can't bear is pusillanimity, self-indulgence, smugness. This is my theory: When Peggy discovers a writer, it's a love affair. When he becomes her client, it's a marriage—and

that's not nearly so enjoyable. I've seen her intoxicated by reading a new writer, some strange new area of experience that she hadn't known about, some curious use of language or some great emotional expression that overwhelms her."

IN spite of her success, Peggy lives without ostentation—though she obviously spends money to keep up her wardrobe, and she can be remarkably generous, buying gifts for her authors and sometimes advancing them money. (If the money comes from Peggy, it is not considered a subsidy.) She divides her time between her London home and a house in Brighton, to which she goes by train on weekends. In Brighton, she works in her garden, reads books voraciously, and, on occasion, entertains friends. For years, her companion has been William Roderick, an actor who understudied and then followed Paul Scofield in "A Man for All Seasons." Their relationship is one of the utmost discretion, and, along with her age, is a subject not to be discussed. The two of them take holidays together, usually in March or April, flying to North Africa and then driving through the desert. She loves North Africa but refuses to return to South Africa, because of her outrage at apartheid.

Peggy seldom visits the United States, and then only, in recent years, for the American premiere of a play by one of her authors. In 1985, she came to New York for Hare's "A Map of the World," and in 1987 for Hampton's

"Les Liaisons Dangereuses." One day during that second visit, Peggy and I were scheduled to have lunch. I picked her up in her room at her hotel, where she was chatting with John Tillinger about his revivals of plays by Orton. Tillinger is one of several talented directors to whom she has entrusted plays early in their careers. (Others include Mike Nichols, who directed Ann Jellicoe's "The Knack," and Tommy Tune, who did Caryl Churchill's "Cloud 9.") I mentioned that a play dramatizing Orton's life was currently running in Philadelphia. Coincidentally, Tillinger had brought a copy of it for Peggy. There was a look of disdain in her eyes as she took the manuscript and flipped through it—in order to see how large her role was.

Over lunch, I asked Peggy who she thought was the best English playwright since Osborne.

Without a pause, she answered, "Humph." That was "Humph" as in a grumble.

Filling in the silence, I suggested that some people—present company included—might say Pinter or Stoppard.

"They'd be quite wrong," she said.

Shifting to two of her authors, I offered the names of Bond and Arden.

"Bond is marvellous, but he's inaccessible," she said. "Both of them are brilliant. Bond still writes, but he can't get his plays on. He doesn't want them on. He's going to die with a lot of plays unperformed."

We talked about other authors of hers, and, while she praised them, she also expressed reservations, not so much about the playwrights as about plays they had written. Even as she made cutting remarks about playwrights in and outside her agency, she remained hopeful about those she had chosen to look after. A sense of commitment and of loyalty superseded her criticism. She seemed most affected by those who had tried to probe deeply into "the dark recesses" of their imagination. In the area of "dark recesses" she gave high marks to David Rudkin and to Jim Cartwright, one of her newest authors. About Cartwright she said, in admiration, "He's a very dark character, a very interesting anarchic creature," and added that she wished "everybody would leave him alone and not put him on a pedestal." About one of her authors who had so far steered clear of the darkness, she said, "He's

just a tremendously hardworking, very, very modest writer. We're talking about genius, aren't we?"

Actually, of all postwar playwrights other than Osborne, the one Peggy most admires is Tennessee Williams. Though he was not her author, he would telephone her early in the morning and have long conversations with her. Peggy's feelings for him were enhanced by her respect for his first agent, Audrey Wood, who, like Peggy, did not take credit for her creative contributions to her clients' work. Peggy, using one of her favorite adjectives, pays Williams the ultimate compliment: "He was the most touching, touching, touching figure." Referring to his later years, she added, "I would have liked to help him. I think he had just half a career." Several years after his death, she became the agent for the Williams estate.

Stubbornly, Peggy refuses to cut back on her work or to reduce her list of authors—to settle down, as she certainly could, with ten per cent of Ayckbourn. When I suggested that it might be easier for her simply to stay with the authors she has, her reaction was vehement. "What's going to happen to the theatre, for God's sake? That's *ludicrous*. An agent who began with Rattigan and Priestley would still be sending out well-made Rattigan and Priestley plays. The theatre would be *nowhere*. But for the avant-garde, where would it be? The avant-garde changed the face of our theatre."

She continued, "Any agent ought to admire Diaghilev, because he found original people all the time. And nobody said, 'Why didn't he just stick to Nijinsky?'" (She once visited Diaghilev's grave, in Venice, and, as an act of homage, sprayed it with his favorite perfume.) The thrill of discovering a Jim Cartwright or an Anne Devlin, another of her new authors, recharges Peggy's passion. "As I said to Harold Hobson, if you read something or see something that almost repels you, that is new talent—and it's unbearable. One must be prepared for the shock of the unfamiliar. It's exactly the same with painting. All those paintings that shocked people fifty years ago are now in sitting rooms in reproductions. It would be much cozier to go back to the well-made talent and the absolutely naturalistic work—and the public would like that, too. They don't always get what they want, but

they do at this moment. The West End is just full of silly little musicals and stupid little revivals. Appalling! Because they make money *now*."

Peggy's continuing quest is for playwrights of character—for somebody "who's not going to get spoiled, who isn't going to drink himself silly, who is a serious professional playwright." She says, "You have to spot them when they write their first play, even if that play doesn't go on. I get dozens of polished plays, but if there's one—even if it's crude—and it hangs in your mind, and you can't forget it . . . Like 'Waiting for Godot'—reading it, I was haunted by it. I always longed for a play to arrive in the office which I would want to back entirely. There's never been a new play that I was totally *passionate* about to that degree—not that I have seen in manuscript."

Peggy has apparently made no plans for a successor at Margaret Ramsay Ltd.; nor do her playwrights think there should necessarily be one. The office remains an exercise in creative flux. She keeps no archives, and casually throws away old scripts as new ones arrive and move onto the shelves. History lies in the numerous theatrical posters that hang on the walls and in the awards (Tonys, Oscars, Obies, *Evening Standard* and Olivier Awards) won by her authors—and in the aura of Peggy that fills the room.

Over the years, she has been courted by large corporate agencies, which want her to merge—or to submerge—her agency into theirs, offering her millions as well as autonomy. At one point, the William Morris Agency, an empire unto itself, took her to an elegant lunch in New York. As she tells it, the luncheon team included the head of every division. They made her an

offer others could not have refused. Naturally, Peggy rejected it, in order to hold on to her independence. "The secret of being an agent is not to sell," she says. "They buy from *us*. I don't sell to *them*, or, if I do, it has to be in such a complicated way that they think they're buying. That's why I probably would not have been successful in the Morris agency."

Remaining on her own has not hurt Peggy in the slightest. Noel Willman says, "People told Peggy that if she didn't expand she would just shrivel away. She is still in those potty little offices operating this potty little agency, and she hasn't shrunk at all, and she'll go on doing it until the day she dies, because she's such a workaholic. She complains all the time, but it's what she wants to do." High on her list of priorities is, of course, play-reading. For her, there is a distinct difference between reading a manuscript and reading a play that has been locked between covers for posterity and production. She loves the feel of a manuscript. It has the hand of the author on it.

Some years ago, one of the manuscripts that Peggy took home was a new translation of Ibsen's "The Lady from the Sea," by Michael Meyer, who is a client (and who, she is quick to comment, makes more money in a year from Ibsen's plays than Ibsen made in a lifetime). She read "The Lady from the Sea" as if it had just been submitted by a prospective author who wanted her to look after him. "Imagine if you had the opportunity to read it before it was ever performed," she said. "I thought, Oh, someone has just discovered Ibsen. Lucky buggers!" She wondered what it would have been like to read the unknown Chekhov or Büchner. Then she recalled, "The first play I ever read when I became an agent was a translation of 'Danton's Death.' And I didn't sleep at all that night. I sat up. I couldn't believe it. It is the most *wonderful* play—and to read it in manuscript!" Her sigh was palpable.

ON an evening in February of this year, Peggy's playwrights gave her a surprise party at the National Theatre, presenting her with an award in compensation for their having, collectively, won so many honors while her contribution went largely unrecognized. At the instigation of Alan Ayckbourn, invitations had gone to all



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her authors in America and England.
As requested, even those who could not
attend responded with their signatures,
which were engraved on a large silver
salver. With some difficulty, the fact of
the party had been kept a secret from
Peggy. No press was invited. As a ruse,
she had been told that a reception was
being held to welcome Richard Eyre as
the new head of the National Theatre.
She was to be taken to the National by
Michael Codron, her escort to many
Evening Standard Drama Award cere-
monies.

More than forty of Peggy's authors
gathered in a gallery at the National,
awaiting her arrival. It was a weighty
assembly; if a bomb had been dropped
on the room, it would have eradicated a
majority of the ranking English play-
wrights. Though they were all repre-
sented by the same agent, many of them
had never met before. James Saunders
and David Rudkin, who had both been
her clients for more than twenty years,
had not seen each other since the nine-
teen-sixties. Younger playwrights had
their first opportunity to converse with
their older, more famous colleagues. It
was a bit like a meeting of a secret
organization such as the O.S.S. People
knew of each other's existence, but they
had certainly never all congregated in
one room before. While waiting, they
shared a feeling of community, com-
paring notes on their agent and on her
importance in their lives. When she
appeared, a silence fell over the room.
The playwrights, suddenly fearful that
Peggy might be furious at being taken
by surprise, completely lost their equi-
librium. In a pack, they moved toward
the wall on the far side of the gallery.

Peering quizzically, Peggy mar-
velled at the fact that there were so
many familiar faces in the room:
Ayckbourn, Hare, Jack Rosenthal,
Willy Russell, John Byrne, Peter
Nichols. Gradually it dawned on her
that they were there for a purpose—to
honor her. "I've been tricked!" she
shouted. To the authors' relief, she
was flattered, and was immediately
caught up in the spirit of the occasion.
Ayckbourn paid tribute in a brief
speech, and then presented her with the
engraved silver salver, and the festivi-
ties continued. She so enjoyed herself
that evening that she announced she
wanted to reciprocate by giving a party
for her playwrights. As usual, Peggy
Ramsay would have the last word.

—MEL GUSSOW

A REPORTER AT LARGE

YUCCA MOUNTAIN

DURING the month of September, 1969, the operators of Dresden Nuclear Power Station Unit 1, in Morris, Illinois, completed the removal of ninety-four spent fuel assemblies from the reactor's core. "Spent fuel" is perhaps the most misleading term in the nuclear lexicon. Uranium assemblies are removed from commercial reactors after three years' "burnup," but not because their radiation is in any way "spent;" rather, they are removed because they have become too radioactive for further efficient use. The type of uranium assembly that powers a boiling-water commercial reactor, such as Dresden 1, consists of a bundle of thin zirconium-alloy tubes filled with uranium pellets. These assemblies are about fourteen feet long and five and a half inches square and weigh seven hundred and five pounds, and when they are removed from the core of a reactor the assemblies are among the most radioactive entities on earth. The ninety-four uranium assemblies at Dresden were now maneuvered, one by one, by remote control, on the hook of an overhead crane, and transferred to a pool adjoining the reactor. There they were locked into an upright position under fourteen feet of water, which, as long as it is kept constantly recirculating, constitutes a containment barrier to both heat and radiation.

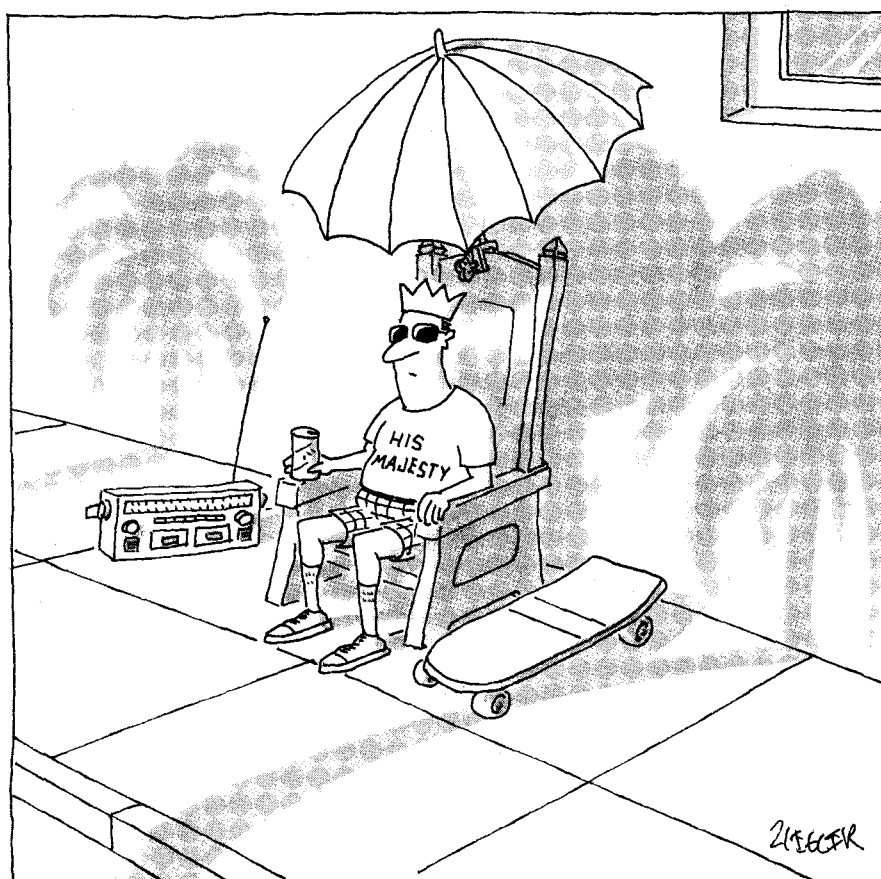
At that time, twelve years after the country's first commercial reactor, at Shippingport, Pennsylvania, generated its first power, the operator of Dresden 1, the Commonwealth Edison Company of Illinois, anticipated having to hold its spent fuel assemblies for several years at most before shipping them off to be reprocessed—crushed, dissolved in acid, and treated chemically to reclaim their unfissioned uranium and plutonium. These still fissionable elements continue to be recovered from the spent fuel of military and research reactors in the United States and from all forms of reactors in a number of other countries, but reprocessing of American electric-utility spent fuel ended in 1972, when the only commercial plant ever to undertake the work, in West Valley, New York, shut down, leaving the Dresden assemblies in their

pool while the federal government carried on studies to determine when and where—and, most important, how—they could be disposed of.

The ostensible reason for the shutdown of the West Valley plant was a demand by the Atomic Energy Commission that a study be made of its construction to determine whether it met earthquake-resistance standards. Preliminary findings indicated that it did, but reprocessing was not resumed, apparently for two reasons. The first was economic: freshly mined uranium has always sold for a small fraction of the cost of uranium reprocessing. (Even with federal subsidies, the West Valley plant was estimated to have lost twelve million dollars in the six years it operated.) The second reason was that reprocessing, although it removes the unfissioned elements, leaves behind hundreds of isotopes, many of them highly radioactive and long-lived, dissolved in a large volume of acids.

It is true that such material can be

neutralized and solidified and stored in massive underground steel tanks, but, like the spent fuel assemblies that have been accumulating in the pools of American power reactors since 1972, they will remain "hot," both thermally and radioactively, for thousands of years. Since 1945, when the first nuclear bombs were produced, billions of dollars have been spent on efforts to find ways to isolate nuclear wastes from the environment forever. Options such as shooting the wastes into space, burying them under the tectonic plates in the deep ocean, depositing them on a remote Pacific atoll, and even leaving them to melt their way through the Antarctic ice cap, were investigated by scientists, but for political or environmental reasons these were all passed over in favor of the idea of burying them in a mined repository. Then came more years of research, costing more millions of dollars, to determine where, and in what underground geological medium, this repository should be



THE KING OF L.A.

sited. Last December, without making more than passing reference to all this research, and without waiting for five additional years of scientific examination that an earlier congressional bill had called for, Congress inserted in the appropriations legislation that annually marks its rush toward Christmas adjournment a measure designating Yucca Mountain, in Nevada, the sole site to be considered for this country's first, and probably only, repository for high-level nuclear waste and spent fuel.

YUCCA, which is described by government geologists as a "typical small fault-block" mountain, stands about a hundred and ten miles west and slightly north of Las Vegas. The mountain rises out of barren but beautiful desert land that is apportioned among the jurisdictions of the Department of Energy, which uses a thousand three hundred and fifty square miles for a nuclear-test site; the Department of Defense, whose Nellis Air Force Base Bombing and Gunnery Range covers four thousand one hundred and twenty square miles; and the Department of the Interior, whose Bureau of Land Management administers most of the remaining land in the area. One morning last summer, before the temperature reached its noonday peak of a hundred and six degrees, I drove there from Las Vegas with Chris West, an information officer with the Energy Department. We parked at the end of a graded road that climbs Yucca's east face and walked the last few hundred feet, to a surveyor's stake that marks the mountain's summit, at fifty-five hundred and seventy feet. From there I could see, to the east, Jackass Flats, part of the nuclear-test site; to the northwest, the Nellis Air Force Base range; and, to the southwest, an unused tract of public land. The site's nearest neighbors—the inhabitants of a legal brothel—live about eighteen miles away in that direction. Twenty miles beyond them is the California border and Death Valley.

"We're standing on a layer of basalt, but underneath it is at least six thousand feet of welded volcanic tuff—rock that is from thirteen to twenty million years old," West said. Below us, on a nearby slope, a United States Geological Survey crew was drawing samples from one of thirty test wells that had been drilled in the formation. "We

aren't going to put the exploratory shaft here on the top of the mountain," West went on. "It will be a few hundred feet down there to the east." Ultimately, the shaft will go down fourteen hundred and eighty feet, into a three-hundred-and-fifty-foot-thick tuff formation, but even then it will be two hundred and eighty feet above the desert water table. Among all the land sites that were considered for the repository, Yucca Mountain is unique in that the spent fuel and the reprocessing effluents are to be placed above the topmost subsurface aquifer. The significance of that is that the chambers holding the waste will inevitably be penetrated by rainwater percolating down through the mountain. However, the Nevada desert doesn't get much rain—only about six inches a year—and ninety-seven per cent of it evaporates before reaching the level that has been proposed for the repository. Department of Energy geologists estimate the travel time of underground water from the repository to the groundwater level at a minimum of nine thousand three hundred and forty-five years.

Last December, when this arid, desolate, and, to all appearances, invulnerable rock outcropping was designated our national repository for high-level nuclear waste, Congress was acting in somewhat understandable frustration. Five years previously, after protracted hearings and much debate, it had enacted carefully crafted legislation mandating a competition among many sites that would be scientifically evaluated for their suitability for isolating nuclear wastes. It was understood that ultimately two sites, one in the East and one in the West, would be selected by the Secretary of Energy and nomi-

nated by the President, and repositories would be constructed under the supervision of the Department of Energy and then licensed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. There was also a provision for an optional facility for "monitored retrievable storage," or M.R.S., where some fifteen thousand metric tons of spent fuel would be stored until the first repository (the one in the West) was opened to receive it, in 1998. To help pay for all this—the 1987 General Accounting Office estimate of the cost of the entire program was between twenty-one and forty-one billion 1985 dollars—utilities would be assessed one-tenth of a cent per kilowatt-hour of power generated by nuclear means. These fees, which are passed on to consumers, now run about five hundred million dollars annually.

In rather short order, the program fell apart. First, the Department of Energy, citing the complexity of the studies it was required to perform to "characterize" three candidate sites for each of the repositories, expanded the entire timetable, so that even the Western repository would not conceivably be able to receive spent fuel until the year 2002—four years after the government was required under the legislation to take title to it. That removed the "optional" label from the monitored-retrievable-storage facility, and the Energy Department duly proposed to Congress three sites in Tennessee, including two on the outskirts of Oak Ridge. Although Oak Ridge has a long and preëminent nuclear history (the town was established, in 1942, to support wartime facilities for the production of uranium and, in small quantities, plutonium), opposition in the rest of Tennessee impelled the state to challenge this order all the way to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court refused to hear the case, thereby upholding an appeals-court ruling in favor of the Energy Department, but opposition continued, with Oak Ridge's congresswoman, Marilyn Lloyd, who is the chairman of the House Energy Research and Development Subcommittee, among the leaders.

Then, just in advance of the 1986 congressional elections—and in time for a number of candidates in the affected states to claim credit for the action—the search for the Eastern repository was either cancelled or put on "indefinite" suspension. (The Department of Energy issued conflicting



statements at the time on whether the search would ever be resumed, and the legislation that was passed last December failed to resolve the ambiguity.) That left the foreseeable burden of being "host" to the nation's spent fuel entirely on the West, even though most of the power derived from it had benefited the East.

A third major setback to the 1982 program, at least in a public-relations sense, was a disclosure in congressional hearings that considerations other than scientific ones had gone into the Department of Energy's designation of the three Western sites to be characterized. Besides Yucca Mountain, these were a salt deposit beneath some of the nation's most productive farmland, in Deaf Smith County, Texas, and a basalt formation underneath the five-hundred-and-seventy-square-mile Hanford Nuclear Reservation, in southeastern Washington.

BECAUSE Hanford has a nuclear history that goes back almost as far as that of Oak Ridge, and because it is already storing, in underground steel tanks, a greater volume of reprocessed defense waste than any other place in the country, it was an early favorite in the competition for the repository, and in fact there was considerable local support for siting the repository there. However, principally for environmental reasons (the prospective site, only four miles from the Columbia River, turned out to be subject to a risk of flooding from a nearby "ephemeral, discontinuous" creek), but also because a repository would cost approximately four billion dollars more to construct and operate there than at any other site, the Department of Energy's own "multiattribute, utility-analysis, decision-aiding methodology" had originally ranked Hanford *last* among five candidates under active consideration.

Then why was Hanford nominated? The explanation of the Department of Energy's Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management was that the department had decided to eliminate cost as a consideration, and that the Secretary of Energy, who made the formal designation, was required by the 1982 law to consider sites in "diverse" geological mediums. If Hanford had been eliminated, the characterization competition would have wound up with two sites in salt (Deaf Smith County and one near Richton, Missis-

sippi). However, at a White House luncheon, and in the presence of President Reagan, Donald Regan, then the Presidential chief of staff, offered another reason. Nevadans needn't worry about the repository, he reassured Hank Greenspun, the editor-publisher of the *Las Vegas Sun*, because "Hanford wants it." Perhaps Hanford, in the sparsely populated eastern half of Washington, did want it, but it turned out that the rest of the state certainly didn't: a referendum in November, 1986, showed that eighty-four per cent of the state's voters were opposed to the project. Anti-repository sentiment is also believed to have contributed to the defeat of the state's Republican Senator Slade Gorton, who was running for reelection that year.

Probably there was even greater public opposition in Texas—particularly in the Panhandle, where the repository project would have required the condemnation of nine square miles of farmland in a center for seeds and organically grown produce. Moreover, reaching the salt formation, nearly three thousand feet below the surface, would have meant drilling through two large aquifers, and the upper one, the Ogallala, was (and is) an important source of water for Midwestern states as far away as South Dakota. Department of Energy engineers claimed that it was feasible (though expensive) to penetrate both aquifers without contaminating either, but several local food-processing firms—the region's largest employers—threatened to move out of Deaf Smith County if the project went ahead. Twenty-one anti-repository organizations, affiliated as the Texas Nuclear Waste Task Force, plastered the state with red-white-and-blue "Don't Waste Texas" bumper stickers, and put up a prominent billboard on the other side of a highway from an office that the Department of Energy had opened in Deaf Smith County. Senator Phil Gramm, a Republican, perhaps having pondered the election results in Washington, also opposed the project.

There was also public opposition in Nevada to the siting of the repository at Yucca Mountain—notably from the anti-nuclear group Citizen Alert—but the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce, though it admitted being concerned about the repository's possible effects on the city's casinos and tourism, took no official position. The most vocal

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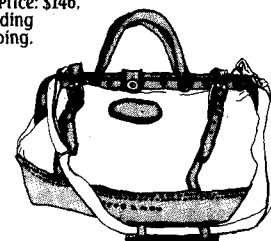
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opponents of the project were Hank Greenspun and Robert Loux, the director of the state's Agency for Nuclear Projects, under Governor Richard Bryan, a Democrat. As for the state legislature, it may have sent a mixed signal to Congress and the Department of Energy planners. Noting that the 1982 law committed the federal government to paying "grants equal to taxes" (or GETT) that the project, if it were privately owned, would pay in real-estate taxes, the legislature acted last May to surround Yucca Mountain with a new county, to be called Bullfrog (after a nearby mining district, which got *its* name from the green color of quartz there). Bullfrog County covered a hundred and forty-four square miles and didn't have a single resident, but it did have the state's highest permissible tax rate—five dollars per hundred dollars of assessed value—and also a provision in its charter stipulating that GETT funds unused for county purposes could revert to the Nevada Treasury.

Paul May, the chairman of the State Assembly's Taxation Committee, is the legislator who formulated the Bullfrog concept, and after I returned to Las Vegas I looked him up at his office in a real-estate brokerage a few blocks from the famous "strip." When I talked to him there, he said, "I've consistently opposed the repository, because of the negative effect it might have on both our water supply and our tourist economy, but I felt that if it does come here we should be in a position to make as much as possible out of it."

Ultimately, however, it looked as if this fiscal tactic might wind up costing the state money, because both Governor Bryan and State Attorney General Brian McKay declined to defend Bullfrog County from the court challenges of Nye County, the jurisdiction that stood to lose the GETT payments, and the legislature had to retain—and pay—private attorneys to act for it. The first—and possibly final—judicial round was decided in favor of Nye County in February, when a Nevada district court ruled that the formation of Bullfrog County violated the state constitution "every which way." One of the plaintiffs in the action, Robert Revert, who operates a gas station and convenience store in Beatty, west of Las Vegas, and is a commissioner of Nye County, blames the legislature for

encouraging Congress to site the project in Nevada. "The state always claimed it didn't want the repository, but when it came to money the legislature prostituted itself," he told me.

Beyond GETT, however, early versions of the legislation siting the repository at Yucca Mountain contained no financial incentives for the state, and even the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee chairman, J. Bennett Johnston, who was the chief proponent of the bill, conceded that the state was about to be victimized by "a cruel trick on Christmas Eve: the waste and no goodies."

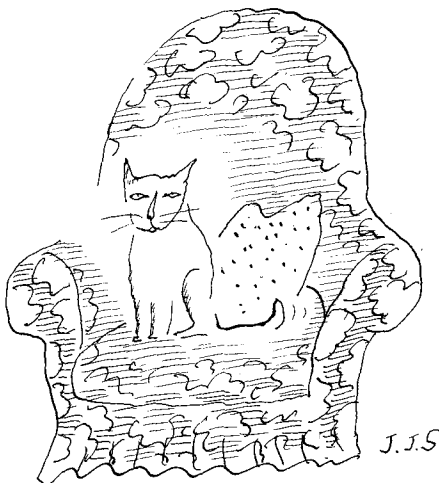
Although Nevada has little clout in Washington—the sparsely populated state has only two representatives, and both its senators are freshmen and so lack important committee chairmanships—Congress did eventually rustle up a couple of "goodies" for it. Under the legislation that was ultimately enacted, Nevada could receive ten million dollars a year while the repository was under characterization and construction, and twenty million dollars annually once the depositing of spent fuel began. If the repository should take fourteen years to characterize and construct—and that is the current estimate—and twenty-four more years to fill to its assigned capacity, of seventy thousand metric tons, these payments would amount to six hundred and twenty million dollars. In addition, the legislation specified that Nevada would be given "special consideration" for the siting of future federal research projects. However, these "goodies" came with strings attached: in order for the state to receive the payments, it would have to sign an agreement accepting the repository, and thus give up its option of challenging the legislation in court. And the worth of the "special

consideration" clause may be judged by the fact that shortly after the repository legislation was enacted Nevada was left off the list of states to be considered for construction of a nuclear-research project it really wanted—a fifty-three-mile particle accelerator that will bring both industry and scientific expertise to the region that wins it. "If another state wants a project, Nevada can't have it," Governor Bryan told reporters that week. "But if no other state wants it, like the nuclear repository, Nevada is considered for it."

Still, as long as Congress was in a Christmas mood, it also permitted Nevada's senior senator, Chic Hecht—a Republican, who is up for reelection this year—to insert in the legislation a couple of clauses he could claim credit for back home. Among them were provisions tightening safety standards for the packaging and shipment of spent fuel, and a stipulation that the Department of Energy revive a dormant research project concerning the possibility of sub-seabed disposal. Although burying nuclear waste under the tectonic plates in the deep Pacific could conceivably be challenged under international maritime law, the Department of Energy has been directed to create "a university-based Subseabed Consortium involving leading oceanographic universities and institutions" to investigate its "technical and institutional feasibility."

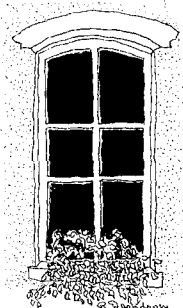
Of course, Senator Hecht was not the only member of Congress whose political concerns were addressed in the legislation drafted by Senator Johnston (with the help of Representative Morris Udall, the author of the 1982 law, which this bill technically amends). There were also the representatives of Eastern states that had been considered as "hosts" of the second repository. Although an Eastern repository is still a theoretical possibility, formations of granite—which is the principal medium so far considered in the East—have been disqualified from future consideration, as the result of a floor amendment introduced by Eastern legislators. Besides, on-site investigations will no longer be permitted—at least, not until the Department of Energy reports to Congress on the need for a second repository, which it plans to do sometime between 2007 and 2010.

Also returned to Square One is the M.R.S. facility that the Department of



Energy had hoped to begin constructing in the Oak Ridge district of Representative Lloyd. The designation of that site has been repealed. There could still be an M.R.S., and it could still be in Oak Ridge, but a three-member commission is to be appointed by Congress to study the question of whether a halfway house for spent fuel between reactors and a repository is really necessary; a possible alternative would be to continue storing these assemblies at reactor sites, either in pools or in iron or concrete casks capable of withstanding the great heat and radiation. If the commission decides that an M.R.S. is needed, the search for a site will begin anew, but construction of the facility will be tied in with that of the repository. If for any reason work on the repository is suspended, construction of the M.R.S. will stop as well.

And, in the end, there are both scientific and political grounds for wondering whether construction of the repository at Yucca Mountain will have to be stopped—or, if it is completed, whether the facility can be licensed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. In designating the site, Congress went ahead without waiting for the Department of Energy to answer some technical questions about the mountain's ability to store high-level wastes and spent fuel assemblies for thousands of years. The questions listed in a published environmental assessment of the site have to do with the possibility that the tuff formation will be found to be too narrow to accommodate any expansions of the repository; the possibility of flash flooding; visible signs of active earthquake faults (Chris West pointed out one from the top of the mountain); evidence that the magnitude of earthquakes may increase in the region; and the possibility that a combination of water and oxygen found in the tuff might contribute to the dissolution of spent fuel. One of the Department of Energy's own scientists, Jerry Szymanski, finds the combination of the last two points disturbing. However, Szymanski's recommendation that "serious consideration should be given to abandoning the Yucca Mountain site and declaring it as unsuitable for the purposes of permanent disposal of the high-level nuclear wastes" was not



disclosed publicly until a month after Congress voted to designate it. His finding, which was sent to Governor Bryan through unofficial channels, is that, despite the desert's apparent aridity, "both short and long term instabilities of the water table can be expected at the Yucca Mountain site," and that in extreme cases "these displacements can result in the flooding of the repository and in expulsion of groundwater at the ground surface."

Szymanski explained after his report was publicized that he was saying not that groundwater would rise under Yucca Mountain to flood the repository but only that more years of research were required to make sure that it wouldn't. Still, his warning was underscored by the Department of Energy's confirmation at about the same time that a seven-hundred-million-dollar underground repository now under construction for a less hazardous form of nuclear waste has begun to fill with corrosive brine. Because it was originally intended solely for defense wastes, this Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, excavated two thousand one hundred and fifty feet below desert land twenty-six miles east of Carlsbad, New Mexico, does not have to be licensed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and the Department of Energy is going ahead with plans to bury in it some of the transuranic (heavier than uranium) residues of nuclear weapons production. However, in the face of a warning by scientists from the University of New Mexico that the repository could fill with the brine, federal planners decided to follow a recommendation made by a National Academy of Sciences committee that the four chambers of the repository now be loaded to only two or three per cent of their capacity, of close to a million fifty-five-gallon barrels of waste. The project's senior scientific adviser, Dr. Wendell Weart, says that "engineering and technical fixes" can be found to keep these barrels dry, but, nevertheless, plans to put a hundred and fifty cubic feet of high-level waste materials in the cavern have been at least temporarily abandoned. Although the New Mexico repository was not designed to hold high-level waste, the Energy Department had planned to put this limited amount there and then dig it out, be-

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fore the transuranic facility was sealed, specifically to demonstrate the presumed capability of underground mined repositories to isolate high-level waste forever *without* engineering "fixes," and, in fact, without further intervention by man.

Of course, the New Mexico salt deposit and Nevada's mountain of welded tuff are not geologically comparable, but, if they were, the transuranic repository would enjoy the advantage of having been constructed in a region relatively untroubled by man; the spent-fuel and high-level-waste repository is to adjoin land sorely distressed by man—an aerial-bombardment range and a nuclear-bomb-testing range. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has expressed concern that earthquake faults around Yucca Mountain may already have been "reactivated by nuclear weapons tests, suggesting that stress magnitudes in the vicinity of the faults are at or close to values at which failures could occur."

BYOND even the question of whether underground and above-ground explosions nearby have already compromised the integrity of the Yucca Mountain site, there is one of common sense: Is it prudent to put nuclear waste, which must be isolated for thousands of years, halfway between a range where nuclear bombs *continue* to be exploded and one that *continues* to be subjected to aerial bombardment? Yucca Mountain actually straddles the unmarked border between the two, and both the repository itself and its "fuel-receiving facility," where canisters of waste will be held until they can be emplaced, will be directly under the flight path of practicing fighters and bombers. Accidents from this practice have already scarred the desert outside the range: in 1973, a Nellis plane dropped six five-hundred-pound bombs on a nearby Fish and Wildlife Service facility. And when the repository is built the Department of Energy expects that there will be low-altitude flights by Air Force planes over trains transporting casks of waste. To address these concerns, the department says that it is prepared to "harden" the spent-fuel-receiving facility to enable it to "withstand the input of strikes of an aircraft containing live ordnance," and to route the rail spur leading to the repository away

from ranges where strafing is practiced.

But five-hundred-pound bombs are firecrackers compared with the nuclear explosions, of up to a hundred and fifty kilotons, that rock Yucca Mountain approximately twice each month. Since 1963, four hundred and sixty-nine "announced" tests have been conducted beneath the test site, and the Natural Resources Defense Council says that its scientists have identified at least a hundred and seventeen secret tests during the same period. While I was in Nevada, I brought up the issue of the bomb tests with Donald Vieth, a Department of Energy engineer, who directed the planning for the Yucca Mountain repository project for five years; recently, he was promoted to a post that makes him responsible for safety procedures at the test site.

"People with technical competence have looked at this, and they see no reason for concern that continued weapons testing would compromise the repository," he assured me. "The closest a nuclear test could come to us is fifteen miles, and at that distance we can't identify a physical effect. Some of our tunnels on the test site are much closer, and they're undamaged."

How about the overhead bombers? I asked.

Dr. Vieth shrugged. "Suppose somebody did drop a five-hundred-pound bomb right onto our repository—that wouldn't affect the spent fuel's isolation. Nuclear reactors are far more vulnerable to the kind of thing you're talking about than our repository would be."

Not surprisingly, the Nevada opponents of the Yucca Mountain project have not been reassured. For some time now, Hank Greenspun has been attempting to marshal opposition to the combination of underground tests and the repository, and I asked him how he felt about the two.

"Not good," he said. "They've made all these surveys to show us how slow the travel time is from Yucca Mountain to our water sources, just in case the repository doesn't hold the waste, but who knows whether the next nuclear blast at the test site won't open a new fissure that will constitute a fast pathway downstream?"

Even if continued testing doesn't compromise the integrity of the repository site, it will inevitably compromise the integrity of the siting process. The

Department of Energy's plan for building the repository promises the host state "full, open and timely sharing of technical information," and that appears to include the results of tectonic monitoring done to test the strength of the formations beneath Yucca Mountain. However, some of these data, if they should be made public, might reveal the timing and the extent of the secret underground nuclear explosions, and therefore compromise highly classified information. The department says that the findings will be given to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission only in closed sessions—if at all. An obvious way to resolve the conflict would be to end the testing (after more than five hundred such "experiments," how many more can be needed to demonstrate the lethal potential of nuclear weapons?), but the Reagan Administration says that the government has no intention of stopping the tests. The repository's opponents say, however, that even if the tests do end they'll continue to fight the repository. "Testing won't go on forever," Greenspun said to me. "Sooner or later, we'll make a deal with the Russians, but once spent fuel goes underground, that is forever."

If, for any of these reasons, Yucca Mountain is found to be an unfeasible place to dispose of nuclear waste (the ultimate decision is in the hands of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which has three years to consider licensing the construction of the repository after the seven years or so that it will take the Department of Energy to characterize the site), the question of where to put spent fuel and the effluents of reprocessed spent fuel will return to Congress. Meanwhile, high-level waste accumulates. At the beginning of this year, in this country, there were thirty-four thousand one hundred boiling-water-reactor assemblies, of the Dresden 1 type, and twenty-two thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight pressurized-water-reactor assemblies (these are slightly shorter but are larger in diameter, more than twice as heavy, and thus even more radioactive), in the pools of a hundred and nine operating commercial power reactors. So far, two-thirds of these reactors have been forced to expand their pools—twice in some cases—and during 1988, the Department of Energy estimates, commercial nuclear power will generate thirty-eight hundred and

twelve more boiling-water assemblies and twenty-one hundred and eighty-eight more pressurized-water assemblies.

Most of this spent fuel will survive in the pools long after the reactors that produced it have shut down. Dresden 1, for example, was closed in 1984, after twenty-five years of operation, and its irradiated assemblies were transferred, in lead-lined steel casks, to the pools of two other reactors in Morris. If these two units also last for twenty-five years, they will be shut down well before the repository at Yucca Mountain could conceivably accept their spent fuel. Military high-level waste, too, is accumulating. More than twelve million cubic feet of it is being stored in underground tanks at four nuclear facilities: at Hanford; at the Savannah River nuclear reprocessing plant, in South Carolina; at the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory, near Idaho Falls; and at the site of the defunct commercial reprocessing plant in West Valley, New York. These effluents have been accumulating at the rate of about two hundred thousand cubic feet a year over the past decade.

"Nuclear waste disposal is a political problem, not a technical problem," Dr. Edward Teller, one of the founding scientists of the atomic age, said about a decade ago, in advertisements promoting nuclear power. And so it has proved—and is still proving—to be. The taking of a state's land—forever, for all practical purposes—and the raising of the approximately fifty billion dollars that will be required to characterize, construct, and operate a spent-fuel and high-level-waste repository are political problems: political problems of a magnitude that the United States has never before confronted in peacetime. And certainly they are too important to have been addressed, without hearings and virtually without debate, solely on the basis of political criteria, by a Congress rushing to get home for Christmas.

—FRED C. SHAPIRO

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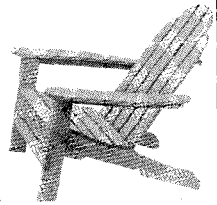
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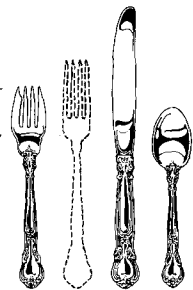
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THE ART WORLD

Originals

BOUNDARY ROAD is a narrow lane in the serene London neighborhood of St. John's Wood. It looks like a bookish American's ideal of a London street at the turn of the century. In the center of the north side of the street is a gray gate—about twelve feet high and fifteen feet wide—so discreetly placed, between a red-and-gilt pub and a storefront, that from the street it looks like the entrance to a driveway. There is a white bell, and no name to suggest that this is the entrance to the Saatchi Collection. When a visitor presses the bell, a television camera on an arm high above the gate comes alive with a faint hum and gazes down. The visitor walks through the gate, and it snaps shut behind him. A broad black asphalt path, bordered by high white walls, leads down a slope. The path turns to the left and leads to a white bunker with a single narrow window. A door opens from inside, and a uniformed guard gestures toward a brightly lit anteroom filled with Peruvian lilies and Plexiglas vitrines. It is as if you had come to pay a call on the corporate art collection of SPECTRE.

Beyond the anteroom are galleries that hold contemporary art belonging to Charles Saatchi, the advertising tycoon, and his wife, Doris. Famous for his takeovers of smaller ad agencies and for his work in political advertising (including all of Mrs. Thatcher's national campaigns), Saatchi is also famous (and feared) as the most ambitious collector of contemporary art in the world. His latest, keenest, and seemingly most peculiar enthusiasm has been for a new school of New York art called, variously, Neo-Geo, Neo-Futurism, Neo-Pop, Neo-Conceptualism, Smart Art, and the New Abstraction. The bewildering variety of labels evokes the one certain belief of this new movement: that we have reached a stage in the history of art where several circumstances—the supposed death of the heroic ideal of modernism, the increasingly marginal role of the fine arts in the age of mass media, and, above all, the voracious appetite of collectors, who have turned art into mere commodities—have made it impossible for artists to create anything new or original. Over the last

eight months, the Saatchi Collection held the largest comprehensive show the movement has had. (The show, called "NY Art Now," was so ambitious, in fact, that it was put on in two parts.) I went to see the second installment, which included works by some of the best-known of the new artists, among them Ashley Bickerton, Peter Halley, and Jeff Koons. I hoped that their pieces, grouped together, might throw some new light on the movement. I also wanted to try to deduce why a great collector might wish to own as many examples as possible of works whose premise seemed to be that art was impossible in a world that included people like him.

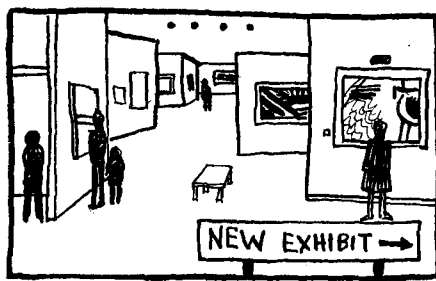
The Saatchi Collection is one of the world's most beautiful galleries for contemporary art. Formerly a paint warehouse, it was renovated by the architect Max Gordon in 1984, and made into an arcade of light. Almost anything in this setting would look good, and since the art in the exhibition seemed at first like a revival of the bold geometric patterns and cheerful popular imagery of American art of the sixties, a quick glance around was exhilarating. But soon the promise of delight turned to bewilderment and then to dismay, for, in spite of all the "neo" labels, the new art is not a revival at all but, rather, an exposé—a set of embittered and vengeful parodies.

Ashley Bickerton makes big, slickly finished slabs and boxes of anodized aluminum, secured to the gallery wall by rows of ostentatiously heavy steel bolts. The faces of the boxes are covered with commercial typography painted in bright primary colors. From a distance they look like apprentice variations on a theme borrowed from those Pop artists who took for their subject the bright heraldry of entre-

preneurial America. But the spirit of Bickerton's work could not be more different from the happy, Whitmanesque spirit of Pop. The lettering on the Bickerton relief "Le Art," for example, comes not from the world of the billboard but from the world of the logo: Alcoa, 3M, CresLite. It suggests not the entrepreneur calling out to the world like a carnival barker but corporate culture overheard whispering to itself in code. In Bickerton's "Abstract Painting for People 4," the cheerful Pop iconography of Coke bottles and soup cans is replaced by skulls, crossed hypodermic syringes, and swastikas. But these once potent signs are arranged in obsessively reductive patterns, as though they had been so endlessly replicated that they can affect us now only as design. Bickerton's slabs evoke a humorless, monolithically ceremonial civilization. He even paints his own signature several times onto some of the slabs—one more logo among the rest.

Peter Halley's paintings seem at first to be pastiches of the hard-edged abstraction of the early sixties. Halley's pictures have a simple "signature" look: Day-Glo rectangles divided by heavy black bars. Twenty years ago, this pattern would have suggested that the materials of modern culture could be triumphantly reconciled with an ideal of absolute, Euclidean elegance. But Halley calls his pictures "prisons," and the bars in them are meant to be read, literally, as cell bars; they symbolize confinement, not transcendence. There is also a punning reference to computer circuits—"cells" of another kind. Halley's pictures suggest that beneath the heroic and pseudo-scientific attitudinizing of geometric abstraction, and beneath all the talk of "autonomous pictorial values," there was never anything more than an unconscious urge to aestheticize the airless, impersonal world of the Third Avenue office building, and to reconcile us to our own alienation.

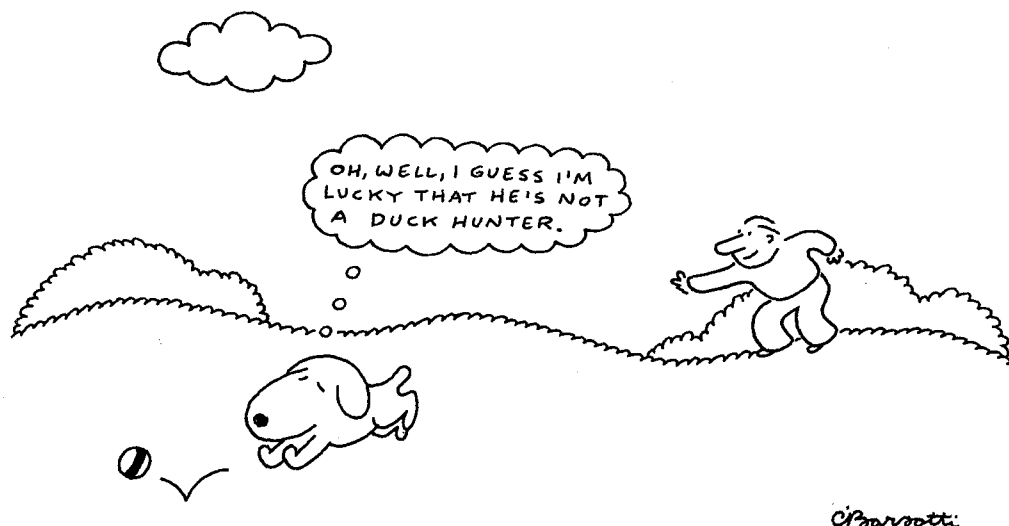
Jeff Koons, the most gifted of the Neo-Geo artists, displaces and transforms everyday objects. He displays real vacuum cleaners in Plexiglas cases and somehow suspends basketballs in aquariums full of water. Twenty-five years ago, when Warhol took Brillo boxes out of the supermarket and put them in the museum or gallery, though it was in part a familiar, Duchampian joke at the expense of the high-minded



ideal of art, it also suggested the possibility of an art genuinely at peace with the central experiences of its culture. And what survives in Warhol's work is its lyricism—its celebration of Pop icons for which we have a shared secret affection. Koons' vacuum cleaners, in contrast, are objects for which no one has ever felt any affection at all. He has a cruel eye for the dead zone of consumerism—for that moment in the evolution of an object when it has neither the energy of innovation nor the charm of nostalgic association.

Koons also makes metal casts of everyday objects: toy trains, portable bars, scuba gear. His most famous work of this kind dominated the largest room in the Saatchi exhibition: a stainless-steel cast of a child's inflatable beach toy—a rabbit holding a carrot. If Koons' displaced objects recall Warhol, his bunny recalls the soft hamburgers and immense clothespins of Claes Oldenburg. But Oldenburg's subject was the emotional life of objects, and his theme was metamorphosis; Koons' subject is the murder of feeling by commodity, and his metaphor is paralysis. His polished objects suggest no emotions except a cool, cybernetic detachment, and his rabbit has become the icon of the new avant-garde—a strange ideal of the self, armored against feeling. In fact, despair about the world we live in and about the possibility of making art in it is evident in almost every work in the exhibition. The artists are filled with passionate intensity about their lack of all conviction.

HOW could this have happened? It is as though some dreadful sliver of ice had lodged in the eye of the American avant-garde, which, whatever its follies and excesses, not so long ago had an almost annoyingly triumphant self-assurance. The Saatchi Collection prepared a catalogue for the show, with long quotations from the artists—a mixture of flat, despairing statements (Bickerton: "I wanted to make paintings that were utterly bleak, utterly without hope. . . . I'm just kicking the great big, corpulent, cellulitic body of art as it lies there in its death-bed") and confident, high-minded "philosophical" claims (Halley: "In my recent critical writing, I have been



very much involved with the idea of revising some of the categories of experience we're used to dealing with, like nature, and more specifically life and death. I think they're both pretty outmoded concepts").

Both the despair and the airy certainty reflect, in part, the enormous recent influence of a single thinker—the French theorist and philosopher Jean Baudrillard. The Pied Piper of the new art, Baudrillard is paid a grave homage in the footnotes to the Saatchi catalogue, and one SoHo bookstore has kept paperback copies of his translated works right by the cash register, like copies of *TV Guide* at a supermarket. Baudrillard's tone and style are those of French structuralist and post-structuralist philosophy: his units of meaning are the oracular aphorism and the ingenious paradox. In contrast to the imperturbable Derrida or the stately Foucault, though, Baudrillard is choleric. In the gloom of his compacted syntax, the reader bumps his shins against political prophecies (a nuclear war is impossible; the weapons exist simply as a pretext for control), "explanations" of current or recent events (the Vietnam War was contrived by the two superpowers to neutralize China; when that was achieved, the war was "spontaneously" ended), and strange "scientific" pronouncements (the AIDS epidemic reflects a general urge to force men into antiseptic bubbles). Where in so much fashionable theory it is accepted that everything implies its opposite, in Baudrillard's scheme everything *is* its opposite—

"metamorphosed into its inverse in order to be perpetuated in its purged form." This belief in what Baudrillard calls "operational negativity" helps give his prose a curious circular rhythm. It's almost always hard to tell exactly what is being argued for and what is being argued against—what is being introduced as evidence and what is being dismissed as illusion.

But a pattern—even an argument of a kind—does finally emerge. Baudrillard believes that since "capital" enforces its power through the manipulation of representations—that is, by deciding not just what we think but how we think—the real object of political analysis in our time has to be the mass media. We have been deluged by a sea of representations, the theory goes, and they have drowned reality. We no longer value our images by how well they represent the world; we value the world in terms of how well it resembles our images. We live in a world of "simulacra"—images that have no reference to anything except themselves. This is true, Baudrillard argues, even of the most apparently violent and disruptive images in our culture. When we watch a hijacking on television, for instance, what we are seeing is not the presentation of an event but the playing out of a scenario.

As Baudrillard himself admits, there is little in this view that could not be found twenty years ago in Marshall McLuhan's writing. What is new is Baudrillard's unrelieved pessimism. When McLuhan first offered his view of the medium as message, it suggested

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gains as well as losses. If the mass media had eliminated the old, contemplative world of books and readers, or of paintings and single spectators, they offered new possibilities, too. By becoming fans of one great spectacle, we might be brought into a new unity—the global village. But for Baudrillard the media image, in its free-floating abstraction, has brought nothing except more and more coercive social control and the utter emptying out of inner life. The global village is one more island in the Gulag of capitalism. The function of simulation and spectacle is to eliminate all possibility of rebellion, which depends on individuals' being able to control their own representations—being able to make reliable, concrete maps of their world and its objects.

Baudrillard's words have landed with a particular force among young American artists, because his message seems to counter a myth of modern American art which had already begun to appear dubious: the belief that art allowed one to escape from the nightmare net of mass imagery and to make something genuinely real and individual. This is the legend of Pollock and de Kooning—free men flinging pots of paint in the face of Big Brother. Of course, a reaction against such a romantic conception of modern art set in a quarter century ago, in the work of Johns and Rauschenberg and the Pop artists they inspired. But Baudrillard confirmed in the new artists a suspicion that this art was also a sham—that the campaign to confront mass culture and make original art out of its forms was still another attempt to give the illusion of individuality to a world of mere simulations.

The logical outcome of Baudrillard's position might seem to be for artists to get into some other line of work. But it turns out that there is something left for an artist to do. Though the system of manipulation is inescapable, you can make works that show your awareness of the *processes* of manipulation: accept your paralysis—the inability to make anything original—but show that you accept it with a dandyish detachment. As Baudrillard puts it, in words that could serve as a motto for the entire "NY Art Now" show: "Let us be Stoics: If the world is fatal, let us be more fatal than it. If it is indifferent, let us be more indifferent. We must conquer the world and seduce

it through an indifference that is at least equal to the world's."

THIS vision of the function of art has hardly been greeted with unanimous hosannas. In New York this April, the left-wing artist Hans Haacke mounted a show, partly devoted to an attack on Saatchi and the "NY Art Now" show. It included a large unflattering photograph of Saatchi and a silver plastic head of Lenin, intended as a parody of Koons' bunny. While I was in London, an expensively produced new journal called *Modern Painters* was launched by the British Ruskinian Peter Fuller; one of its aims is to "eradicate" the Saatchi Collection and the art it exhibits. Fuller suggests that art has lost its way because it has become fatuously international—an expression of art bureaucrats who "tend not to regard themselves as an integral part of a common national culture." The antidote to media art is a renewed romantic nationalism.

All this seems strange. The ideologues who you'd think would be happiest with the new art despise it most, while the person who is supposed to be its target—the bourgeois capitalist collector—is all for it. Some people have suggested that there is some hypocrisy in the gap between the adversarial position that the artists assume and the fact that they are making objects to be bought and sold by Charles Saatchi—that the "new stoicism" resembles good old-fashioned cynicism. On the other hand, some people claim that it has always been the role of the avant-garde to be the conscience of the middle-class, and that it is no surprise the new art has been extraordinarily successful with precisely that section of our society whose power it pretends to analyze and subvert. According to this theory, the new art provides what amount to *vanitas* images for the information merchants—new versions of the old still-life tradition that displays material objects in order to suggest their ephemerality. Far from being a sign of the decline or a crisis of "capital," the new art suggests how confident and triumphant this culture remains. The real moral of this episode in the history of art is not that originality is dead but, rather, that the information merchants are the new Medici.

It has also been suggested that the

new art and its supporting ideology show an astounding failure to understand precisely what is supposed to be its main subject—the social aspects of originality. Baudrillard and the artists who have been influenced by him look upon art as essentially a process in the mind or consciousness of the individual artist. If “originality” depended solely on an individual’s ability to break entirely free from the imprisoning context of culture, then, of course, originality would be impossible. The fact is that the originality of modern art, like all originality, depends on the communal resorting of tradition—on the exchange between an artist’s gesture and a receptive audience. The Koons bunny, for instance, may symbolize a kind of emptiness, but it does so only because its audience can recognize that it sits within an intricate, invisible web of relationships—as an update of Duchamp’s readymades, a mean parody of Brancusi’s polished animal essences, a joke on Warhol’s cult of silver. For “originality” to exist, it is less important that artists be “free” than that we as an audience accept the instability of meaning as a convention in the game of art. “Originality” depends on the existence of a flexible inherited language, a set of shared stereotypes, an abstract vocabulary of form—on precisely those “free-floating” and ambiguously referential images that Baudrillard deplores as “simulacra.”

The real issue is not “Is this work of art original?” but “Does it reimagine tradition in a way that is an extension and illumination of our lives?” Even if “originality” is a pseudo issue, the new art might still have something to say about our world and time. No one can live in our culture without sharing some sense that we are overwhelmed by a flood of images, money, and inauthenticity—that as the spectacle of modern life grows bigger it comes to mean less. But can this be any less complicated a feeling in the lives of the new artists than it is in the lives of the rest of us? They feel the powerlessness of modern existence, but they must also feel (as they have surely enjoyed) its puzzling abundance, and their lives, as much as ours, must take place on the tightrope that spans the empty, allur-

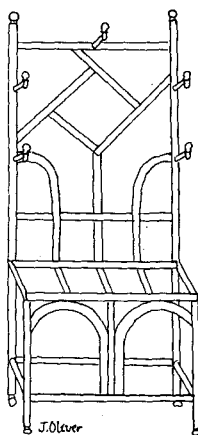
ing world of spectacle and the increasingly inaccessible (and therefore ever more precious) world of private feeling. Infatuated with a sentimental myth of loss, the ironies of the new art finally turn into a kind of nostalgia. Once upon a time, the new artists tell us, there was a world in which we controlled representations instead of having them control us, a world where art provided reliable maps instead of mere simulations, and where the traffic between the artist and the viewer was somehow simpler; now, expelled from that mythical world, we surrender to an art of deadening repetition and complete absence of feeling.

When I left the Saatchi Collection, I turned south off Boundary Road onto a long, beautiful London avenue bordered by stone walls. The street seemed strangely familiar, though I had never walked there before. I approached a crosswalk (it looked familiar, too) and glanced around and saw the street sign. “Abbey Road”! I had been here a thousand times before. I was standing in the dead center of the cover of the last album the Beatles recorded. This was, I recognized a little ruefully, the perfect Baudrillardian demonstration. Something had become “real” only by virtue of being recognized from a familiar reproduced im-

age. Then three people approached and performed a tourists’ ritual—walking across the street, Beatle-fashion, for a picture. As I watched them, it occurred to me that this was a cautionary model of everything I was supposed to have learned about images in modernity from the new art. An act like this was the perfect simulacrum. But I didn’t feel that way about it at all. I thought that here was the

kernel, the tiny seed, of precisely what images are good for—what we use them for. It is in the soiled, endlessly replicated image that we begin our search for a language of private expression. Taking a secondhand model and deciding how to apply it to our own lives is one of the ways that we recognize life as *life*: as something with a shape and a history, and not just an empty flow of experience—as something worth a picture.

—ADAM GOPNIK



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Yousuf Karsh

LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

IN keeping with this unusual election year, the two parties have in effect decided upon their nominees at an uncommonly early stage of the nominating process, and the general election has begun at an uncommonly early point. Both George Bush and Michael Dukakis, through a combination of superior resources, long-planned campaigns, skill, and luck (and also the failings of their opponents), had their nominations in hand earlier than any nonincumbents since the modern system of nominating candidates began—probably, unfortunately, establishing a model for future campaigns. At no time, under the current system, were the Pennsylvania and Ohio primaries, held in the past two weeks, afterthoughts, as they were this time. Dukakis in effect had the nomination in hand as a result of the New York primary, on April 19th, and Bush, who in effect had his sewed up when Robert Dole dropped out, at the end of March, officially had enough delegates for the nomination as of the Pennsylvania primary, on April 26th. Yesterday, Pat Robertson, the only remaining Republican candidate,

said that he would drop out and support Bush, and last night, amid great hoopla at a Republican fund-raising dinner, President Reagan, in what should have been a non-event but had been built up by the Bush people into a big thing, endorsed Bush. The only surprising thing about it was how tepidly he did so. He just may not have relished the idea of moving aside. (Today, Reagan, puzzled by the reaction, put out a more effusive statement.)

Dukakis is still accumulating delegates, but few doubt that he will have enough for the nomination before the Convention. Tad Devine, Dukakis's chief delegate-hunter, says that enough delegates will be in hand "when the voters have spoken on June 7th," when the last major primaries occur. Dukakis, who has used the metaphor of the marathon to describe his effort, has steadily and relentlessly, if unflashily, mowed down the other candidates, until only Jesse Jackson is left. Jackson's continuing fight, in which Dukakis has been defeating him by margins of two to one or more in the major contests, is not for the nomination but for an as yet undefined position in Democratic Party politics. Though the Dukakis people

are not completely at ease about what might happen in the California primary, on June 7th, since Jackson is making a major effort there and Californians have a way of registering a protest vote (they have voted against the front-runner in every Democratic contest since 1972), the elimination contest for the Democratic nomination is over. (Jackson will effectively skip New Jersey, which also has a lot of delegates at stake on June 7th, in part because its rules are less advantageous to him.) Talk of the Democrats having a brokered Convention, or a brokered process before the Convention, ceased (with the exception of a few diehards) after New York. Whether or not the public is overjoyed at the choice it is now presented with, the Presidential candidates are the result of the kind of process we have—putting a premium on planning, doggedness, and money—and they won fair and square. Whether any other, "better" nominees could have come out of any other, "better" process is unknowable and academic. Now the nation is embarked on a mystery: despite the certainty with which opinions are rendered, no one can know now which candidate will win. Current polls are meaningless, and predictions are only guesses. Later on, when the outcome is known, there will be a lot of "of course"s, but there is no "of course" now. Handwringing over the candidates and the rest of the general election is now fashionable, but those who say, fashionably, that the election will be "dull" understand neither the candidates nor what the fight for the greatest power this nation confers is all about.

THERE is little question that at the end of the Democratic Convention we will witness a familiar tableau (only the faces will be different), as Dukakis and Jesse Jackson—and Albert Gore and Richard Gephardt and Paul Simon and Bruce Babbitt, and maybe even Gary Hart (who is a bit of a lost soul these days)—stand at the podium, arms raised in unity. Dukakis has to take a number of steps to get there from here, and to be careful, but what is forgotten every four years is that the losing candidates have almost as much need to be there as the winning one does (even if, as in the case of Edward Kennedy in 1980, the loser seeks to avoid the raised, clasped arms). Obviously, for a number of reasons,



Sunday Best

Dukakis's getting to that point with Jackson is complicated, but it will happen; in the end, Jackson has no choice. As it turned out, Jackson's victory in Michigan, in late March, was also his undoing, as it led Democrats to rally around Dukakis as the most feasible, and available, alternative to Jackson, and to proceed as if it were a two-man race. Michigan set the Dukakis campaign's plans back, but one Dukakis adviser says, "Michigan was the best thing that happened to us." The event not only concentrated the mind of the Democratic Party but taught the Dukakis campaign some lessons. (One measure of a campaign is how quickly it learns from its mistakes.) Gone were the talk of "inevitability" and the numerous appearances of Dukakis with political endorsers (what Dukakis's campaign manager, Susan Estrich, calls "blue suits") while Jackson was out there taking his case to the people. Dukakis literally rolled up his sleeves and tried harder. When Albert Gore was unable to be a viable third candidate in New York, Jackson's hopes of winning that state were destroyed, and Dukakis started rolling up large margins over Jackson, and it was over. After New York, Jackson seemed unprepared for a two-man race.

The New York primary was a nightmare for all three Democratic candidates—all of whom were glad to get out of the place once the contest was over—as well as for a great many citizens of New York. Dukakis's decisive victory—he got fifty-one per cent to Jackson's thirty-seven per cent and Gore's ten per cent (forcing Gore from the race)—may have sealed the nomination for him, but not without considerable discomfort. Dukakis now says he realized that he would be the nominee, and reached what for him was a high, on the beautiful spring Sunday before the voting, when he and his wife, Kitty, marched up Fifth Avenue hand in hand, in a parade marking the fortieth anniversary of the founding of Israel. One could see it in their faces: the recognition that the serious-minded, formerly obscure governor and his equally determined wife were about to realize their dream, become among the most famous people in the world, and could actually contemplate moving into the White House next year. The outcome of the primary was never in as much doubt as the Dukakis people were

saying it was in the closing days—to assure a high turnout of Dukakis supporters—and Dukakis could have the satisfaction of having won the state without the support, which he had sought, of either Governor Mario Cuomo or New York Mayor Edward Koch. But the dark nature of the New York primary left a shadow. And the candidates, including the winner, were all but lost in the explosion of racial and religious hatred.

It was another in Dukakis's string of lucky breaks that Koch did not endorse him, though the Dukakis people thought their candidate would receive the Mayor's blessing and were disappointed when Gore received it instead. Koch's manic, running stream of invective against Jackson was a major embarrassment to Gore and made a bad atmosphere in New York still worse. ("Do you want a President who under stress is not capable of telling the truth?" Jackson has "character flaws.") Even without Koch, the story of the New York primary had become blacks versus Jews, and what the candidates were saying on other subjects was drowned out. Cuomo hurt himself by his indecision (accompanied by a string of impenetrable statements) over whether he would endorse a candidate, though it had been clear for some time that his best interests lay in remaining neutral, as he eventually did. Jackson's victory in Michigan may well have been a factor in Cuomo's decision not to endorse Dukakis—after Michigan a number of Democrats held back their endorsements of Dukakis for fear of appearing to be trying to stop Jackson, and thus offending blacks. By the time, shortly before the New York primary, that Cuomo more or less said he would not accept a draft, it appeared all the more that he had actually been hoping for one.

Gore, meanwhile, had got himself into a public argument with Cuomo over his attacks on Dukakis and Jackson, and then even when he toned down the attacks he got into long explanations of why a statement of a difference between him and Dukakis or Jackson was not an attack. Gore's basic problem was, as it had been in most contests outside the South, that people didn't much like him. (New Yorkers do have a way of being more explicit about these things.) Moreover, his campaign still had no rationale. By the



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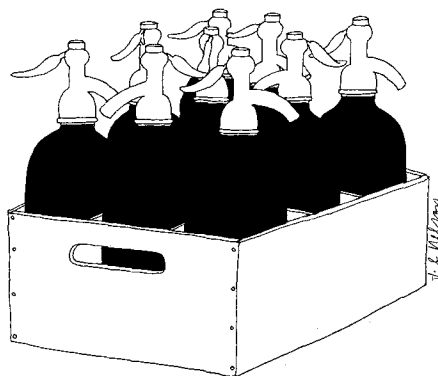
end, David Garth, who apparently thought he had signed on with a hot property, and who made mediocre ads for Gore, was publicly dumping on his candidate. Two days after the New York primary, Gore made a graceful withdrawal speech—graceful withdrawal speeches are *de rigueur* this year—but he did not release his delegates, many of whom want to go to the Convention but not as Jackson delegates. This was acceptable to Jackson, because, as Gore explained to him in an hour-long meeting on the night of the New York primary, many of Gore's delegates would have gone to Dukakis. Also, according to a Jackson associate, Jackson appreciated the fact that Gore had sought him out that night; despite some tensions, Jackson and Gore had maintained frequent contact throughout the primaries. Gore, who was obviously dismayed by Koch's performance, had sent word to Jackson that he was unhappy about it.

Gore's advisers say that, in the end, despite the embarrassment, Koch's endorsement was a net plus, because Gore's campaign was all but dead at that point. For better or for worse, the endorsement got Gore some attention. He came out of the nomination contest with some new problems: a debt of at least \$1.8 million; increased unhappiness with him on the part of Senate colleagues (among whom he had never been terrifically popular because of his egocentrism even as senators go), because of his criticism of the letter that thirty of them had signed criticizing the Israeli government; and problems with blacks in Tennessee, who were angered by his attacks on Jackson. The Gore people say that Jackson will make some appearances with Gore. There have been numerous analyses of the tactical mistakes the Gore campaign made: essentially, it had no strategy for what to do after March 8th ("Super Tuesday"), and followed several concurrent strategies, dipping into states it couldn't win and squandering the candidate's time and money—and some of his advisers think he should have got out of the race after Wisconsin; but the problems went deeper than that. (Future tacticians will probably decide that Gore's fate shows that a candidate has to run in every state, starting with Iowa, that "momentum" can be decisive.) Gore never figured out what his candidacy was about, and the persona he pre-

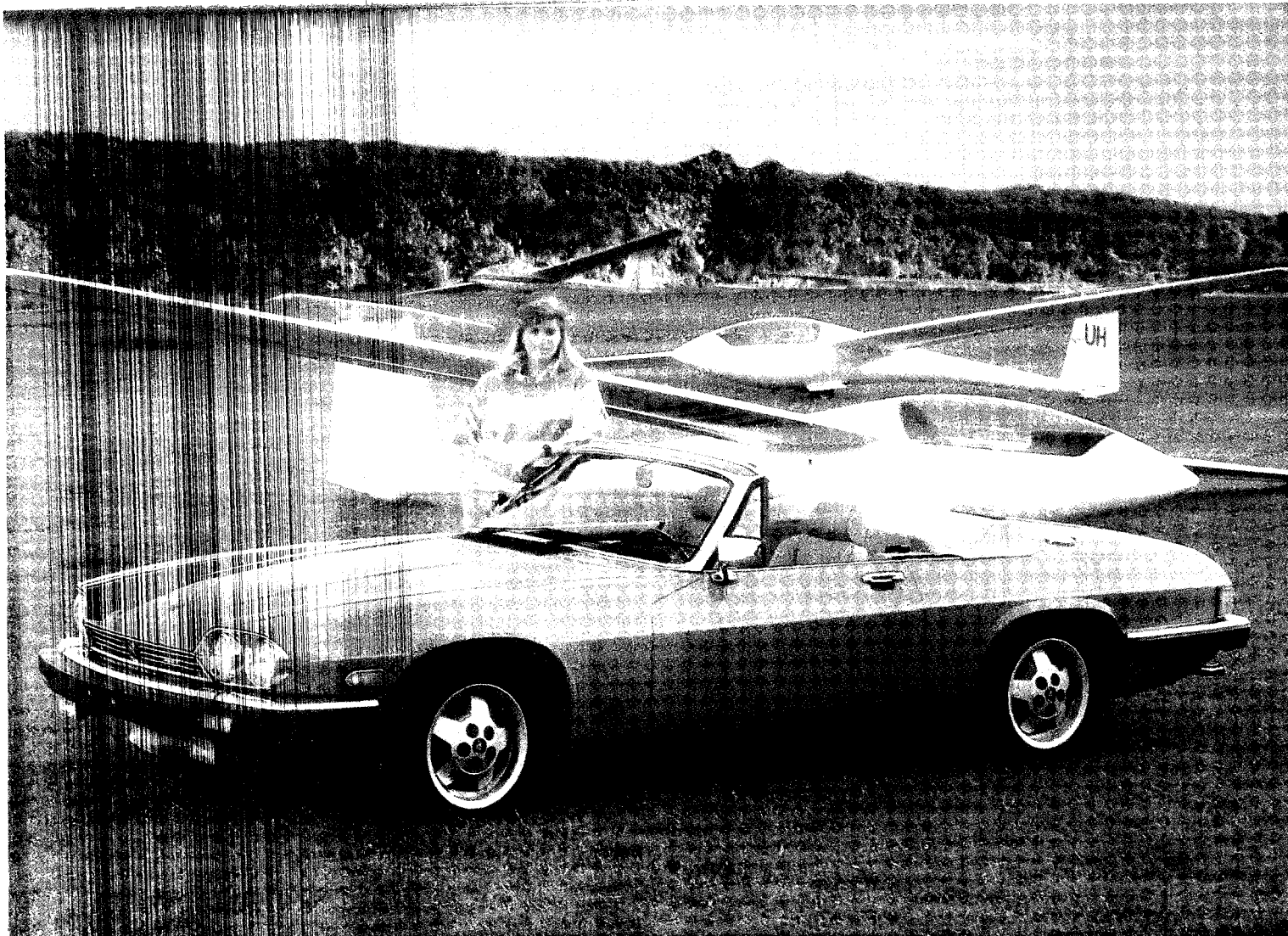
sented to the voters was remote and unclear. Some of his associates are already talking about his making another try in four years.

WHILE the Middle East is often a topic in the New York primary, with the candidates bidding for the Jewish vote, it became more of one this time, because of Gore's upping the ante by essentially backing the Israeli government's opposition to the Administration's efforts to get negotiations going, and because of Jackson's past sympathy for the P.L.O. Jackson was all over the lot on this in the course of the primary—at one point saying that as President he would not negotiate with the P.L.O. and at another taking positions more sympathetic to the P.L.O. On this, as on a number of other matters, Jackson (who has Arab-American support) both listened to and acted upon the conflicting advice of his advisers—a trait that continues to cause problems, and that may well make his path to the Convention an unsteady one. Dukakis was extremely fortunate that the great preponderance of Jewish voters in New York were primarily concerned with making sure that Jackson did not win, and understood that a vote for Gore could help Jackson—the message that a vote for Gore was a vote for Jackson was made unmistakably clear—and therefore chose to overlook the fact that Gore was "better" on Israel than Dukakis was. This tendency was disturbing to some Jewish leaders, who felt that it would be a disincentive to future candidates to staunchly take their side, and this concern was believed to be one of the factors that motivated Koch to support Gore. At the same time, many blacks saw the New York primary as the culmination of an effort by the Democratic Party establishment and the media to gang up on Jackson.

The decision of most New York



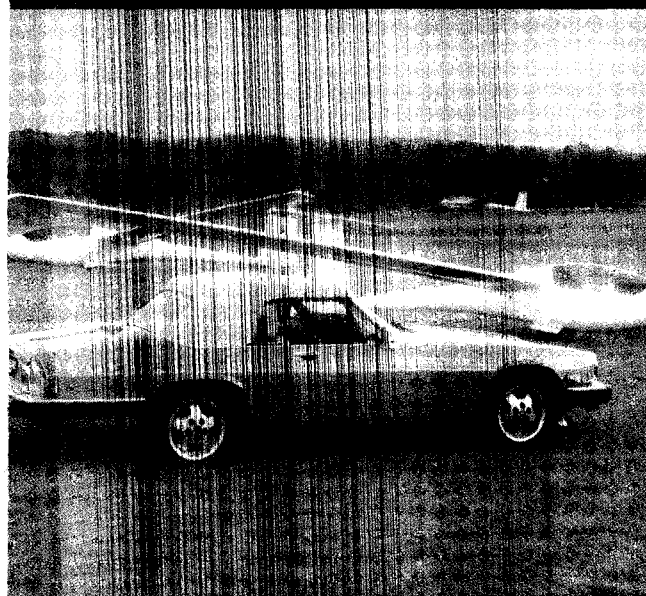
Jews to go with Dukakis was a great relief to his aides, who knew that he had not done particularly well in a critical meeting with Jewish leaders. Though Dukakis, in his speech to the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, on April 11th, blamed Arab leaders for the impasse in the Middle East, he removed from his speech text a line, urged upon him by his advisers, pledging his opposition to a Palestinian state, and in the question-and-answer session that followed continued to sidestep such a pledge. While his advisers said at the time that this showed that Dukakis is his own man, they were actually very worried. At this meeting, Dukakis also suggested that the status of the city of Jerusalem is negotiable—not only is the possibility of the internationalization of Jerusalem anathema to Israelis but Dukakis's suggesting that the question was negotiable undercut Israel's negotiating position—and shortly after the meeting made himself available to the press to clarify this statement, saying that he had always supported a unified Jerusalem under Israeli rule. But there were also other matters on which Dukakis ruffled the sensibilities of many people in his audience. Several thought that his frequent references—fifteen by some counts—to the fact that his wife is Jewish were heavy-handed, and even condescending; and his telling of his wife's having been called to the Torah upset Orthodox Jews in the room, who forbid such a thing. To some members of his audience, he seemed to have not given his subject serious thought—to be winging it. In her own campaigning in New York, Kitty Dukakis told Jewish audiences that her father, Harry Ellis Dickson, an associate conductor of the Boston Pops orchestra, hoped that his son-in-law would win the Presidency so that he could conduct the Boston Pops in the East Room and conduct the first Seder in the White House. Bush, in New York, pounced on Dukakis's refusal to rule out a Palestinian state, and his advisers say that much will be made of this, but they are also uneasy about the advantage Kitty Dukakis can provide her husband among Jewish voters. Moreover, Dukakis, in a major change in his political persona, has in this campaign made use of his own ethnicity, not only making himself appealing to Greek audiences, who get very excited about him, but also mak-



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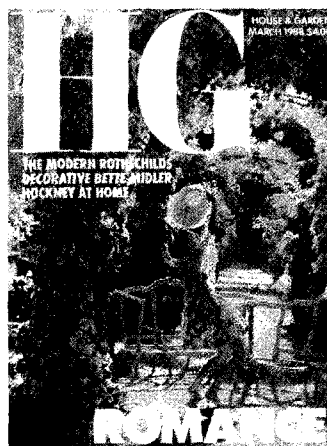
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ing himself into a sort of generic ethnic—the successful son of immigrants, who talks proudly about his parents and their success. (He was reportedly advised to do this by Cuomo.) His cousin Olympia Dukakis, who had just won an Academy Award for playing an Italian mother in “Moonstruck,” was imported to New York to spread the lagniappe. If some voters thought she was Italian, so much the better.

But though Dukakis did not run a particularly wonderful campaign in New York, he stayed steady—his equanimity is an important asset—and his self-righteous insistence on running a “positive” campaign played out well for him amid the maelstrom. (Dukakis took oblique shots at Jackson and Gore when necessary.) By keeping his head down, he got through it, but others dominated the agenda. (Dukakis continued to tell voters, “I am what I am.”) Both Dukakis and Gore suddenly started talking a lot about drugs, prompting Jackson, whose anti-drug effort preceded even his 1984 Presidential campaign, and who talks to young people about drugs with great effectiveness, to say that he expected his rivals to echo another of his themes by saying “I am somebody.”

And Dukakis made another mistake in New York that shows a vulnerability his campaign knows must be dealt with. In an interview with the *Daily News*, he insisted, several times, that the position of the Israeli government on negotiating with the P.L.O. is something other than it is (he said that Israel would negotiate with the P.L.O. if the P.L.O. recognized its right to exist), and eventually had to be corrected by Representative Stephen Solarz, of New York, who had endorsed Dukakis and was accompanying him. This was another sign of Dukakis’s arrogance—his relying excessively on the fact that he is a quick study. (It also displayed his stubborn streak.) The vulnerability is the combination of Dukakis’s still superficial grasp of foreign policy combined with his firm belief that he knows more than he does. His advisers are hoping to persuade him to spend more time on foreign policy once the nomination is wrapped up, but they have been trying all year to persuade him to spend more time on it. His positions on nuclear weapons don’t hang together, and there are other weaknesses in what he has been saying. He has, however, been taking opportu-

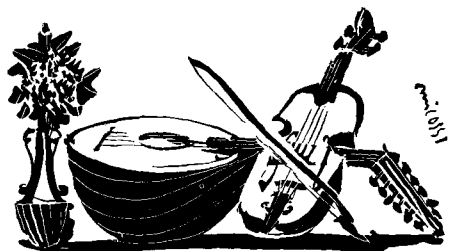
nities to say that he would use force in various circumstances—he even presents himself as eager to do so, answering such questions quickly (sometimes too quickly) and affirmatively—and intends to make it difficult for Bush to paint him as a weakling or a naïf. (Some of the things Dukakis says would scare the daylights out of people if they were said by a right-winger.) Besides, some of the things Dukakis gets wrong are details that confuse the public; what will matter more are the impressions the voters have of him and Bush, which man they think is tougher.

INEXORABLY, the Dukakis campaign is working to roll up the delegate count. Dukakis now has 1,597 delegates (of the 2,081 now needed for the nomination), to 944 for Jackson, with 587 delegates committed to other candidates and 518 as yet uncommitted. The Dukakis people say that, while they want to keep the delegate count growing, they don’t want to do it in a way that makes it look as if they are trying to strong-arm their way to the nomination, or that offends Jackson, or that is unattached to what the voters are saying. But there is also a logic in this for elected politicians, who do not want to get too far astray from their followers. And Jackson, in a meeting with House Democrats last week, said that one way to insure his followers’ enthusiasm for the Democratic ticket would be for more super-delegates to vote for him. He is seeking to give pause to elected politicians who might take their black votes for granted and support Dukakis. Jackson, who has been complaining that his delegate count does not reflect his popular vote, is not expected to mount a challenge to the rules, as he did in 1984, or at least a successful one, because they have since been changed in his favor and he accepted those changes. But Jackson, says a close adviser, doesn’t think in terms of ruling something in or out, and takes things a step at a time. He does feel, the adviser

says, that if the number of his super-delegates is very at odds with his proportion of the popular vote this would be a sign of exclusion, and could well affect his enthusiasm for the Democratic ticket. The Dukakis people say that the rules should not be changed retroactively. (They may be prepared to discuss changes for the future.) Just in case, however, they are getting prepared for challenges of the rules or credentials by Jackson, and making sure that they have control over the relevant Convention committees. Jackson of course might also mount a fight over the platform, which Party leaders are trying to keep vague.

Dukakis, consistent with the methodical way he has run his campaign, has had an operation in Washington for some time, using a whip system on Capitol Hill and “surrogate advocates”—all manner of supporters, including former members of Congress and lobbyists (sometimes these are the same thing)—to win over members of Congress to the Dukakis candidacy. The Mondale campaign, in which some of the Dukakis people served, stands as a model for a number of things that the Dukakis campaign wants to avoid. One of these is having it appear, as the Mondale people did, that the delegate accumulation toward the end came simply as a result of political machinations, which, in combination with some other things—such as the appearance of pandering to interest groups, and the parading of Vice-President potentials (including two women, a black, and a Hispanic) before the press—contributed to an impression of Mondale as a political hack. But some politicians are holding back from endorsing Dukakis for their own reasons. Some who didn’t endorse Dukakis early, when it counted more, see no great reward in endorsing him now. Some are still loath to offend Jackson’s followers among their constituents, and a number of members of Congress, particularly from the South and Southwest, think that Dukakis will lose the general election, at least in their territory, and that supporting him would be a liability.

Paul Simon, who also did not release his delegates—though the Dukakis people are at work to take them from him—says he still contemplates the possibility that Dukakis might stumble and the Party might still turn to someone else (not him, he says), who might



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generate more enthusiasm (Mario Cuomo, Bill Bradley, Dale Bumpers), and that he might still play a role. But his position also has to do with the desire of other Illinois politicians, as it has all along, to go to the Convention. He says that some senators are holding back on endorsing Dukakis less because they have strong negative feelings about him than because they want to remain free to turn elsewhere. Though Gephardt has released his delegates, he has asked his congressional supporters to stick with him until the Convention—this would give Gephardt leverage for who knows what, and some of his congressional supporters entertain the idea of his being tapped for the Vice-Presidential slot. Releasing whatever power one might have is unnatural for a politician, especially if he has made great exertions to obtain it. An influential Southwestern congressman whom the Dukakis forces had especially hoped to win over says that he is staying with Gephardt “because that’s the safest place to be.” Staying with Gephardt gives some members of Congress a place to park rather than risk their political necks with conservative whites by backing Dukakis or offend their black constituents. Moreover, Representative Les Aspin, Democrat of Wisconsin and, as chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, a centrist on defense matters, has been privately telling his Democratic colleagues that Dukakis’s defense program makes no sense. (Aspin says he is hopeful that Dukakis will sort this out.)

Some senators and congressmen feel that they are in for another Jimmy Carter—another President who would have to be educated, another President from an alien culture. The frequent likening of Dukakis to Carter is facile, but understandable: both men ran for the Presidency from a governorship, both are technocratic, humorless, and confident of the power of their brains to overcome obstacles. The Dukakis people have recently taken additional steps to soothe and woo Washington politicians: Dukakis and top campaign people have made trips to the capital to seek support and assuage worried members of Congress (with the Dukakis headquarters in Boston, the two worlds seldom meet), and some respected Washington figures have been added to the campaign roster,

though their roles are for the moment undefined. One close observer of the campaign says, “They need to be seen to be reaching out.” The Dukakis people also emphasize that Dukakis is listening to certain respected members of Congress on foreign policy, which unwittingly underscores the need for him to do so. (The Dukakis campaign wants to get away from the impression that the candidate is surrounded by Harvard.) Some people, in Washington and elsewhere, having missed the boat by advising other candidates, are now trying to hustle, even muscle, their way into the Dukakis campaign. The Dukakis people talk quite a bit about their attempts at “outreach,” and their intention to work with national Democrats on issues, and also to begin to build alliances for the time when Dukakis may be President and have to govern. While there is no reason to doubt that they have these sincere intentions, what the exercise really seems to be about is playing to large egos, bridging a culture gap, making people more comfortable with Dukakis.

THEN, there is the relationship with Jackson to be worked out. On one level, Dukakis is working out the relationship simply by beating him soundly. (He defeated him in Pennsylvania sixty-seven per cent to twenty-seven per cent, and, the following week, in Ohio sixty-three per cent to twenty-eight per cent and Indiana seventy per cent to twenty-two per cent, and, on Tuesday, by large margins in West Virginia and Nebraska.) At the same time, shortly after New York the Dukakis campaign started to send the message to Jackson that if he wanted to face large defeats on several Tuesdays, so be it, and if he wanted

to fold ’em Dukakis was ready to talk. Dukakis and Jackson have actually spoken weekly, the morning after primaries, and chat in the course of joint appearances. But Dukakis, according to his advisers, has taken care not to give the appearance of thinking that he has the nomination sewed up, not only to avoid riling Jackson but also to eschew “inevitability” and avoid a political backlash (for instance, in California).

Jackson has been buffeted by conflicting political advice, exhausted, and was for some time after New York in a bad mood (the latter two were connected). He felt battered by the events sur-

rounding the New York primary and, having believed some of the predictions that the race was tight there, and even that he might win, was disappointed in the result. After New York, Jackson congratulated Dukakis for his "splendid" campaign, and for a while was almost playful with him. But then, at the instigation of some of his more ideological advisers, he began to press Dukakis to make more of a commitment to spending for certain domestic programs and pressuring South Africa, and also to pledge to send arms to the Marxist government of Mozambique, which is under attack by forces backed by South Africa. Jackson is surrounded by a free-floating group of advisers, any part of which gets his ear at a given time, and some of whom take pride in showing how muscular they can be on his behalf. His less ideological advisers feel that Jackson's pushing Dukakis toward more leftist positions has simply resulted in helping Dukakis, who didn't give, come across as a moderate, and got Jackson away from what his campaign was about.

Dukakis, meanwhile, ran in Pennsylvania and Ohio as "a full-employment Democrat"—he said, "I'm a dyed-in-the-wool, true-blue, full-employment Democrat"—but it is clear that he is not to be confused with Hubert Humphrey, because he is not offering the full-employment programs of old, nor is he espousing old Democratic redistribution policies. Dukakis talked, for example, of bringing to western Pennsylvania, where a number of steel mills have been shut down and unemployment is relatively high, the recovery and high employment that Massachusetts has experienced. But the parallel is questionable. No candidate has a solution for the laid-off steelworkers, because there may not be one: a revival of the steel industry would involve new techniques, using fewer workers. (Dukakis did tell workers in Pennsylvania that he won't be able to get back to the same employment levels of eight or ten years ago, but this was not a prominent part of his speeches.) Dukakis proposes a "Fund to Rebuild America," of a half-billion dollars, which would be used as "leverage" to restore prosperity across the country, through "teamwork" among business, labor, and government. This is something approaching an industrial policy, of which Gary Hart spoke in 1984, and which some Democratic

economists champion, but how and whether it could bring prosperity to the land is unclear. And Dukakis is as yet unformed, and apparently still to be tutored, about macro-economics and monetary policy. Jackson, seeming more resentful as time went on, complained that while he had submitted a budget Dukakis had not—any proposed budget, of course, raises questions, and Dukakis is seeking to avoid such questions and commitments. In response to Jackson, Dukakis says, in his snappish way, that anyone who says that you should submit a budget now "doesn't know what budgeting is all about." Dukakis is said to be haunted by his having had to raise taxes when he first became governor, after campaigning on a pledge not to do so, and to believe this was one of the things that led to his defeat for reelection in 1978. Jackson complains that Dukakis "would manage Reaganomics, I want to change Reaganomics."

Some of the Jackson people's tendency to go off on their own hasn't been particularly helpful to their candidate. Shortly after New York, Gerald Austin, his campaign manager, and Willie Brown, the Speaker of the California Assembly and his campaign chairman, started saying that Jackson should be considered for the Vice-Presidential slot on the Democratic ticket. Jackson, annoyed at such public suggestions that the nomination fight was over, publicly told them to cut it out. (Jackson was also unhappy that his national campaign had lost control of his schedule in New York and Pennsylvania, and had him essentially appearing before black audiences, which left him little opportunity to broaden his base. For a variety of reasons, he received less of the white vote in these states and Ohio than he had in some earlier contests.) Recently, Brown, in a talk with *Wall Street Journal* editors and reporters, issued a series of demands on Jackson's behalf—which other Jackson advisers didn't find helpful. A number of people have been trying to set themselves forth as the ones to be negotiated with on Jackson's behalf, but the Dukakis people are going on the assumption that the person to negotiate for Jackson will be Jackson, when he is ready.

Jackson appears to be aware that Dukakis does not plan to offer him the Vice-Presidential slot (Dukakis has al-

ready sent that signal), and to have the self-knowledge to understand that it is not a role he would be well suited for; he is also said to understand that if he were on a ticket that lost he would be blamed. But he also has the problem of coming away from his highly successful—in its own terms—Presidential campaign with enough to satisfy his followers. The press has helped to get his followers' expectations up by continually raising the question of whether Jackson will, or should, be on the ticket; polls that "show" that a ticket with Jackson on it would win are, like many polls, the result of people's telling pollsters what they think is the right thing to say. The Dukakis people un-

derstand that Jackson must be treated with sensitivity and—to use a word he used four years ago—respect. Jackson himself has indicated that he might like the position for which he is perhaps ideally suited—as the leader of a Democratic Administration's anti-drug crusade. There are a number of possibilities. Since Jackson in the end has no choice but to try to help the ticket (his standing would be significantly diminished if he didn't), what it will all come down to in the end is how Jackson chooses to play it. He is likely to give off conflicting signals before he finally decides.

IN keeping with the displacement theory of political speculation, now that the question of who the nominees will be is all but officially settled, the speculation that went into that question now goes into the question of who the running mates will be. Both candidates will keep the answer as close to the chest as possible—it's the one surprise they have left for the Conventions, or shortly before—and it is probable that neither has made up his mind. But that doesn't discourage the speculation. Since Dukakis feels that he can't appear to be assuming that the nomination is in hand, his campaign says that he has sworn not to talk about a running mate until later. But there have been discussions within the Dukakis camp, and Dukakis himself has already sent some public signals.

Shortly after New York, in an interview with Thomas Oliphant, of the *Boston Globe*, Dukakis transmitted the thought that he would not ask Jackson—by laying out his criteria for the person to be on his ticket: that the

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person has to be credible as a potential President; that experience in foreign and defense policy is important (thus filling a Dukakis gap); and that consideration of other political factors, such as what region the person would presumably be helpful in (it doesn't always work out that way), would come only after the other criteria had been met. Of course, a Presidential candidate is not likely to admit that political factors would be paramount, and, in fact, all of Dukakis's criteria are political.

People close to Dukakis think that he may well have one or two names in mind, and that one of them most likely is Senator Sam Nunn, of Georgia, who is the consensus choice of a number of Democratic politicians. The argument for Nunn is that his stature on defense issues, on which he is a sort of conservative centrist, and his politically moderate record would make him the most helpful. Even those who think that even with Nunn as a running mate Dukakis can't carry most Southern states believe that Nunn would be helpful in numerous other states because he might bring moderate and conservative whites across the country back to the Democratic Party. Some even see him as potentially the factor that could seal California, with its conservative swing areas, for the Democratic ticket. The combination of Nunn's relative conservatism and Dukakis's fluency in Spanish leads some Democrats to dream of capturing Florida, Texas, or California. A lot of people with nothing better to do have argued that Dukakis should also offer Nunn the role of Secretary of Defense, which is a terrible idea (among other things, a President has to be able to fire his Cabinet officers, and if a Vice-President has any important role it is as a dispassionate adviser to the President about the competing claims of the Cabinet departments), or that Dukakis should offer Nunn the role of coordinator of foreign and defense policy. (This presents problems as well.) The idea is to come up with something substantial enough to tempt Nunn to give up his current position, which he had long hankered for, as chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. While Nunn has not publicly or privately ruled out accepting the Vice-Presidential nomination—if it is offered—he also expresses a desire to stay where he is. Nunn is a

proud man, as well as a cautious one, and is aware of the demeaning aspects of the Vice-Presidency, even with a well-intentioned President. He is also aware of the fact that if he accepted he might have to spend a good deal of time during the campaign explaining the many differences of view between him and Dukakis; this would cover domestic policy as well, where Nunn has a fairly conservative voting record, including on civil rights. (Some of Nunn's allies say that, because of this record, running as Vice-President might be the only way for him to get considered for the Presidency. Nunn, on the other hand, has to consider the impact on his stature if he ran and lost.) Lane Kirkland, the president of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., is enthusiastic about Nunn as the running mate because Nunn's views on foreign policy are closer to his than Dukakis's are and because labor, like most of the Democratic constituency groups, wants to win this time. Some liberal Democrats in Congress are willing to swallow Nunn's voting record in the interest of regaining the White House—and making the next Supreme Court appointments. One leading congressional Democrat told me that, while he is not enthusiastic about Dukakis, and doesn't much like Nunn, the Supreme Court's recent five-to-four vote to reopen a 1976 civil-rights decision jarred him into enthusiasm for a Dukakis-Nunn ticket. But Dukakis is described by associates as most disinclined to bargain away, or appear to bargain away, the Vice-Presidential slot.



The current thinking at the top of the Dukakis campaign is that if the Nunn idea does not work out Dukakis should go for the strongest national figure he can get, rather than pick someone because he might carry a certain state. Therefore, other names on the list the Dukakis hierarchy is preparing for him to consider are Bill Bradley (if he is available, which is doubted), John Glenn (a hero, military weight, plus Ohio), Daniel Inouye (Senate stature, a war hero, service on the Intelligence Committee, an appeal to minorities), House Majority Leader Thomas Foley (from the state of Washington and therefore possibly helpful in the West, highly popular, but considered unlikely to give up his place in line for the Speakership), and Dale Bumpers (an-

other popular senator, a strong speaker, a Southerner, but has balked at running for the Presidency for what he said were family reasons). And then again Dukakis and his people might come up with an entirely new idea.

Bush has the luxury of spending longer on his decision, and waiting until after the Democratic Convention, in mid-July (the Republican Convention begins in mid-August), to weigh all the factors, including the Democratic ticket. A number of Republican Vice-Presidential names are floating around, and two criteria, aside from the usual high-minded ones, appear to be Bush's feeling of compatibility with his choice and the political exigencies of the Bush effort. In other words, a decision will be taken as to whether Bush most needs to mollify the moderates (which could lead him to a number of names) or the conservatives (which could lead him to Jack Kemp). The name of California Governor George Deukmejian has been floating around, but recently it has sunk in upon the Bush people that Deukmejian would be replaced by a Democrat and that this would not sit at all well with California Republicans. (The current political thinking is that Dukakis cannot win without California but that Bush can. Still, Lee Atwater, Bush's campaign manager, says, "I can see three, four ways we could win without California, but it would be no fun, so the easiest thing for us is to win California." When we spoke, a couple of days ago, Atwater was planning to go to California to scout the situation. Bush people say that because of Reagan's dominance Bush has had little exposure there.) Others said to be under serious consideration are Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and Kansas Senator Nancy Kassebaum (these may be names floated for political effect), Senate Minority Whip Alan Simpson (popular, from Wyoming, and perhaps helpful in the West), another Western senator or two, and a number of governors or ex-governors: Thomas Kean, of New Jersey (but an aristocratic preppie, like Bush); Lamar Alexander, (ex) of Tennessee; Richard Thornburgh, (ex) of Pennsylvania; James Thompson, of Illinois (his name always seems to be on the Vice-Presidential list); and even White House Chief of Staff Howard Baker (who has tried to be a

Vice-Presidential nominee as well as a Presidential one, but hasn't shown much national political appeal). By the time the choices are made, some other names will probably be floated, some for political effect. That no one knows who the choices will be, and that sometimes the decision doesn't make any difference, does not discourage the speculation.

THOUGH the outlines of the general election are already clear, something always happens, and some issue or other always develops, that no one can foresee. No one should doubt that this will be a tough, hard-fought election. Bush has shown himself to be tenacious, and his campaign staff has shown that it can play very rough; Dukakis is about as determined as a person can be, a tough cookie, and he has shown that he can play rough. The Bush people have been saying that they expect the election to be very close, and some people solemnly accept this as inside information, but what else can the Bush people say? They can't say that they expect to win, for fear of fostering lethargy in the troops; and they can't exactly say that they expect to lose. Some Bush people have been confident—overconfident, in the eyes of some Republicans—but others believe that Dukakis will not be easy to defeat. Atwater says, "He has shown that he's formidable, durable, and knows how to follow a plan." One Bush adviser said to me recently that among Dukakis's advantages are that he is a new face, that the public might decide after eight years of a Republican Administration that it is time for a change, that Dukakis is very smart and has largely avoided the traps set by the special interests, he speaks Spanish, has an ethnic appeal, and has a Jewish wife.

The Dukakis people themselves argue that their campaign has navigated through the special interests and avoided looking like Mondale four years ago, but Dukakis has made a few promises, including a very expensive one demanded by certain Social Security recipients, who feel that they didn't get as large a windfall from a change in the law as other retirees got. In New York, he also made a little-noticed statement, to a senior-citizens forum, that he favored ending the taxation of half of Social Security benefits

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of those with an income over twenty-five thousand dollars. (This was imposed in the 1983 reforms of Social Security for budgetary and equity reasons; it brings in about three and a half billion dollars a year. A number of Democrats think the tax should, if anything, be increased.) Dukakis has also told certain peace groups what they wanted to hear, including that he supports a ban on the flight-testing of new missiles—a position that some other Democrats think is unwise. Dukakis has also stated at various times that various objectives would be his first priority: he would introduce legislation to reform campaign financing (he hasn't talked about that for a while), and more recently he said, "If I'm elected President, there will be an agenda ready to go that already has a congressional majority: minimum wage, welfare reform, plant closings, health care, housing." At other times, he has said that his priorities will be job creation and education. In New York, he told the audience of Jewish leaders that the first thing he would do as President would be to go into round-the-clock negotiations on the Middle East. But Dukakis has shown in his campaign for the nomination a fleetness of foot, an elusiveness, that makes him hard to pin down and doesn't leave him on the defensive for long. Peter Teeley, Bush's press secretary, says, "I think Dukakis will be like a moving target; he adds up to a candidate that is a greased pig."

Dukakis's response to questions about whether he has sufficient foreign-policy credentials (a dumb question to ask him, since he has a pat response) continues to be that Bush may have a long résumé but he was sitting in the room when Reagan made decisions to sell arms to the Iranians. His response to questions about whether his claim to have created the "Massachusetts miracle" is valid (it is only in part) is to smile at the question and cite statistics about Massachusetts' low unemployment rate, and Dukakis's people feel that the public won't want to get bogged down in the minutiae of what, exactly, Dukakis did and did not do for the state. Dukakis was recently hit with a substantial revenue shortfall, due to slower growth in Massachusetts, causing the cutting back of various social programs, and the Bush people will undoubtedly make as much of



this as they can. Dukakis's response is that he'll deal with the matter by making the "hard decisions" Reagan has avoided to balance the budget. (Massachusetts' constitution requires a balanced budget, and, of course, the state has no Pentagon.) Dukakis's people know, with some unease, that another target for Bush will be Massachusetts' program, supported by Dukakis, allowing convicts, including first-degree murderers, brief furloughs after ten years in jail. (This was changed after a convicted murderer on furlough escaped and committed rape.) Challenged on this by Gore, in New York, Dukakis gave a rather lame response, and can be expected to respond by as-

serting that Massachusetts has a tough criminal-justice system. The Dukakis people know that Bush will also campaign against Dukakis as an opponent of the death penalty for drug pushers—which a large majority of the public supports.

Bush and his campaign people have already been working to depict Dukakis as a Northern Jimmy Carter and a Kennedy-style Massachusetts liberal all rolled into one. Not all Bush advisers are happy with this negative strategy, especially at a time when it is also important to start painting a positive picture of Bush and take him out of Reagan's shadow. Also, it bespeaks worry. Bush talks about Dukakis's probably taking us back to the "malaise" of the Carter period, but this point about a misused quote of Carter's has become a bit tired, and Dukakis will argue that the campaign is about the future. Bush also says that the issue is the future, but he is having a harder time defining what he means by that. His advisers say that he has been spending a lot of time with experts, in Washington and on the road, on such subjects as education and drugs and health care (why is he just now learning about these things?), and that he will shortly give a series of speeches about where he wants to take the country. Thus far, Bush has had trouble enunciating a message, and in his attacks on Dukakis he often appears on the defensive. Bush charges that Dukakis says that "it's midnight in America" and that he talks about "pink slips" and gloom, but though it is true that Dukakis talks about laid-off workers he campaigns as an optimist to whom nothing is impossible (even if he

is hazy about how he will do it). Some Bush people (and perhaps Bush) are dismayed by Reagan's announcement that he will veto the trade bill because of a provision requiring companies to give employees sixty days' notice of plant closings. The issue is largely political on both sides: the Democrats, prodded by labor unions, saw a good issue in the plant-closings provision, and put it in the trade bill, which had been worked on for three years, in the view that, whether or not Reagan accepted the provision, the Democrats couldn't lose. Reagan was responding to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and probably his own instincts. Most companies already announce closings well in advance.

Dukakis has begun to show how he will handle the "liberal" issue. In the recent primaries, he has told voters that it's not conservative to pile up the kind of deficit that Reagan has, and that he has cut taxes and balanced budgets. (He also does not rule out raising taxes.) The Dukakis people have not had as much time as the Bush people to develop the general-election issues (and the Republicans boast about their formidable research effort on Dukakis's record), because they still have the nomination to wrap up. But an adviser says that the Dukakis side will counter the Dukakis-as-Carter argument with challenges to Bush on whether he is attached to Reagan completely or is his own man, and say that either answer will cause Bush problems.

And the Democrats will have fun trying to stick Bush with Edwin Meese and the "sleaze" issue, whether or not Meese remains Attorney General through this fall. A report by an independent counsel on Meese's role in the Wedtech scandal is due soon, but even if Meese is not charged with an indictable offense (the independent counsel, James McKay, has already said he probably would not be) he would still be in a lot of trouble as a result of his numerous ethical lapses—more come out each day. Presumably, there is a higher standard for an Attorney General than that he hasn't been indicted. The sudden resignation, in late March, of two high Justice Department officials, along with four assistants (followed by three more resignations later), had the desired effect of getting Washington's attention on the fact that something was very wrong at the Justice Department, and Meese has

had an embarrassingly hard time getting respectable people to fill the high-level slots. Morale at the Justice Department is terrible; officials there don't want to push new policies now, for fear that Meese's name on them would doom them. The country has recently been treated to what has become the standard libretto for these matters: word is leaked that Mrs. Reagan, high White House officials, and old friends of the President want the offender to leave office, but the President stands by his man. After the leaks, there is a round of statements that, perish the thought, no one is trying to get So-and-So out of office. The story usually ends with So-and-So leaving, and though both Reagan and Meese are stubborn and prideful men, a number of people think that Meese will be gone before the election. The Bush people desperately want him gone, and know that Bush will be taunted to criticize Meese or be seen as a "wimp." A previous victim of the ouster strategy, Donald Regan, who is still hopping mad over having been pushed out unceremoniously, got his revenge by writing in his new book that Mrs. Reagan determined the President's schedule according to the advice of an astrologer. The White House says that the astrologer didn't affect substance, but a President's schedule is substance. The book is shallow and spiteful, and overlooks Regan's own considerable shortcomings, but it has the ring of authenticity. It shows Mrs. Reagan as a powerful and difficult force, and the President as passive and largely uninterested in what is going on around him. He is content, in Regan's picture of him, to speak to his advisers in generalities and to manipulate the symbols of the Presidency—which he does superbly.

Reagan has been plagued by ungrateful memoirs—by David Stockman; by his daughter Patti; by his adopted son, Michael; and, recently, by his former spokesman Larry Speakes, who wrote that he had made up some quotes that he had attributed to Reagan. The everyone-out-for-himself ethos of the Reagan Administration has come back to bite its leader. The book market and the speaking circuit are overloaded by former Reagan Administration officials, who have shown an unprecedented propensity for cashing in on government service. The lack of discipline within the Adminis-

tration, another consequence of Reagan's passivity, continues to cause him damage; his inability to establish close relationships with anyone other than his wife left a loyalty gap. The oddest thing about the Speakes story is that Reagan didn't notice the manufactured quotes—or, perhaps, as a former actor, he thought they went with the job.

Though Bush is vulnerable on the Iran-Contra issue—his explanations don't hold water, and there are more questions about his role, and trials could be under way this fall—Dukakis will have to come up with more than that on foreign policy. He criticizes Bush for his florid toast to Ferdinand Marcos during a trip to the Philippines in 1981. ("We love your adherence to democratic principles.") He will argue that the Reagan Administration has been delinquent on the Middle East and should have got involved sooner, and he will remain critical of the Nicaragua policy as "illegal." (There is a temporary truce in Nicaragua, and ceasefire talks between the Sandinistas and the Contras are limping along; both sides needed a respite.) But Dukakis does not grant that U.S. aid to the Contras got the Sandinistas to negotiate, just as he does not concede that the U.S. arms buildup got the Soviets to the table. He opposed the United States' initial taking of military steps to protect shipping in the Persian Gulf (so did Nunn and Henry Kissinger), and when, during the New York primary, there was a clash between U.S. and Iranian forces in the Gulf, he first said that he approved of the President's retaliation, and then, as the conflict grew, said he needed more information before he could comment. This was a reasonable position under the circumstances, but the Bush campaign plans to make much of it. Meanwhile, the United States has broadened its commitment to protect shipping in the Gulf.

Dukakis has already weighed in against Bush on the issue of drugs, arguing that he accomplished little as head of a Reagan Administration task force on drugs, and against the Reagan Administration for having done business with Panamanian leader Manuel Noriega, a known drug dealer. Dukakis (like Dole before him) raises the question of whether Bush, as a former director of the C.I.A., or as Vice-President, knew about Noriega's involvement in the drug trade. (No-

riega is said to have received money from the C.I.A., and he was helpful in aiding the Contras.) Bush had said he didn't know about Noriega's drug activities until Noriega was indicted by Florida grand juries, in early February; more recently, he said that he didn't have "evidence" of them until the indictments. It's not clear that this is a question on which the Presidency should be decided, but though Republicans will argue that the Carter Administration did business with Noriega, too, and also knew about drug activities in Panama, the issue does, as Bush's closest advisers know, present Bush with problems: "drugs" is a hot word, and Bush himself has said that he was Reagan's "co-pilot," so where was he on this (especially as head of the drug task force) as well as on the Iran-Contra matter? Is he telling the truth?

The Reagan Administration is now suffering acute embarrassment over the difficulty it ran into in trying to get Noriega to leave office, especially since, early this year, the President called for "democracy" in Panama and Secretary of State George Shultz said that Noriega had to go, and for some time Shultz and other officials publicly predicted that Noriega would be leaving the country soon. The policy was essentially initiated by Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams, who, other Administration officials believe, was trying to find something that would divert attention from Nicaragua and demonstrate that we still have clout in Central America, show that he was against dictators of the right as well as the left, and put himself in better odor on Capitol Hill, where his having misled Congress on the Iran-Contra affair had earned him substantial enmity. Abrams talked Shultz into going along, and so the United States embarked on a public policy of overthrowing a head of government—and for a long time hasn't been able to pull it off. The policy was begun without clear thought being given to how to make it work. Other officials, reportedly including Treasury Secretary James Baker, Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci, and national-security adviser Colin Powell had serious reservations about the policy—Baker opposed the imposition of economic sanctions, which have had the effect of ruining the Panamanian economy and alienating Panamanians



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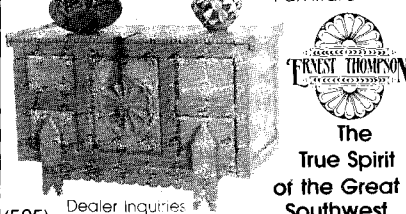


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from the United States. But the combination of Congress's agitation (from left to right) about drugs and Noriega, and the indictments (which weren't coordinated with other officials), eroded the position of officials who thought the policy was going too far too fast. Some of Abrams' more harebrained ideas, such as kidnapping Noriega or using United States troops to overthrow him, were scotched (and leaked) by others in the government. A number of deals with Noriega, including our dropping the indictments (this idea met with outrage on Capitol Hill), have been rumored in recent days, and most people think that he will be gone before long—but not on the terms the Reagan Administration had publicly stated, and long after the Administration said this would happen. Some officials say that our meddling strengthened Noriega's hand. The whole thing has taken on the aspect of comic opera.

Dukakis, of course, has his own vulnerabilities from things he has said about foreign and defense policy. Bush has already begun to attack his lack of experience in foreign policy, and to question his toughness. ("Can you imagine the Democrats standing up to Qaddafi and liberating Grenada?") The Dukakis campaign has begun to stage some foreign-policy events to make Dukakis appear "Presidential."

THOSE who think that the campaign for the Presidency will be "dull" haven't been watching the candidates. The coming campaign may not be inspiring, there may not be many lines that lift our hearts, but two determined politicians, each with a large number of determined people behind him, will be fighting over very large stakes. Neither man may be a rock star, or a spellbinder, but both are tough campaigners. If Dukakis is not the most compelling speaker, neither, certainly, is Bush. Bush, moreover, is an awkward campaigner, has a tin ear, and can panic, leading him to sound squeaky and say something silly. Dukakis has developed a way of speaking that has urgency and energy to it, while Bush has developed more self-control. (And his campaign keeps him largely cocooned from the press.) Neither man is very good at humor, but Dukakis every once in a while comes up with a line that seems to work; it seems to stem less from natural

humor than from a knowledge that humor is part of the job. More efforts have been made to loosen up Dukakis's image: having him talk to children, toss a football, dance the Lindy (as well as Greek dances). Dukakis will be scrappy, but even he is aware that he sometimes goes overboard in debates, going from being scrappy to being unpleasant. While Bush is still developing his general-election message, Dukakis clearly will run as a can-do man, a doer; he argues that he can create jobs, points to a recently enacted universal-health-care program for Massachusetts (this had been worked up with the Presidential campaign in mind), argues that more should be done for the homeless. Both men say they are for doing more for education, but neither is proposing anything that will bring about the reformation that our school system desperately needs. Both candidates will use the economic facts that best suit their purposes: though there has been an unprecedentedly long period of economic growth, and unemployment is, at 5.4 per cent, the lowest it has been since 1974, the growth has been neither great nor even, and a number of polls continue to show that most Americans are worried about their economic future. Recent exit polls in large industrial states showed that blue-collar workers and independents were more inclined toward Dukakis than toward Bush. People close to Bush know that it is difficult for a party that has been in power for eight years to appear fresh and energetic. The Democrats, for all their own problems, do project an energy and a pragmatic desire to win.

While Dukakis comes across to many as a competent, can-do man, he also has characteristics that aren't particularly likable. The public may grow tired of them—before, or after, the election (if he is elected). Bush comes across as a likable man, who has had important experience, but who lacks definition and may be weak. Barring some event or the emergence of some issue that tips the scales, and barring any great mistake on the part of either campaign, the election may well be decided, as elections often are, not on arguments about policy but on the visceral sense of the voters—how they actually feel about the two candidates. And that's a decision that may well be made late in the game.

—ELIZABETH DREW

THE THEATRE

Bloody Awful

AMONG those works one might consider adapting for the musical stage, I would have thought that a story whose plot is set in motion by the onset of the heroine's first menstrual period belonged pretty far down the list—only a notch or two above John Chadwick's "The Decipherment of Linear B." "Carrie," the first splatter musical, which opened last week at the Virginia Theatre, is based on the Stephen King novel about an awkward and unattractive teen-ager with the gift of telekinesis (the ability to move objects around with your mind) whose rage and frustration at being publicly humiliated on prom night causes widespread destruction, killing off most of the senior class and burning down what would otherwise have been her alma mater. "Carrie" was developed and directed by Terry Hands, the chief executive and artistic director of the Royal Shakespeare Company. It has a minimal book (by Lawrence D. Cohen, who wrote the 1976 movie directed by Brian De Palma), undistinguished music (by Michael Gore) and lyrics (by Dean Pitchford), like "Father Almighty, she's only a child, but the woman is waking inside her"—a line that falls to the indomitable Betty Buckley, who, trouper that she is, was brought in to play Carrie's religious-fanatic mother when Barbara Cook's good judgment led her to abandon the role.

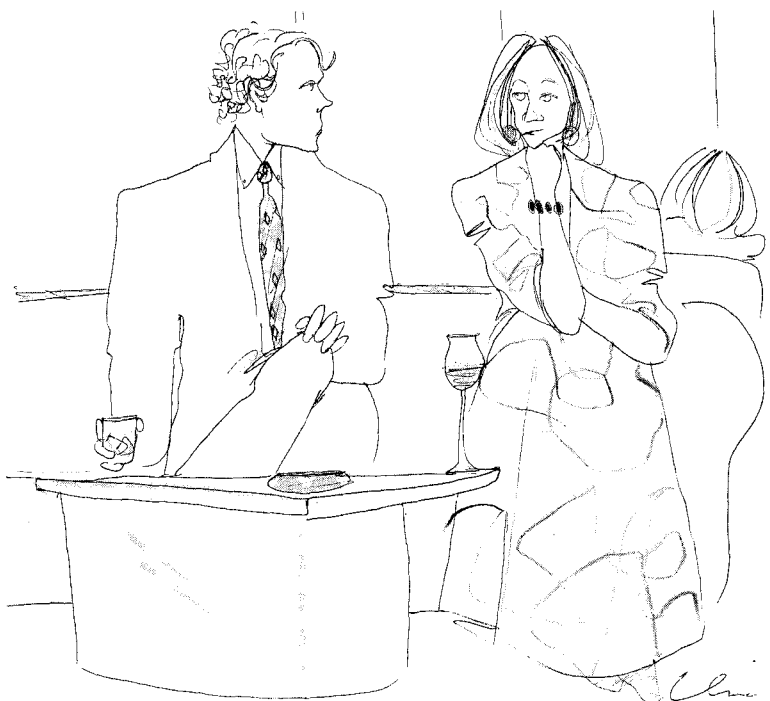
I gather from the many people who admire Brian De Palma's movie "Carrie" that it is appealing primarily as the ultimate revenge fantasy: devotees will tell you that it's fun to watch plain Sissy Spacek become pretty Sissy Spacek; that it's possible to care deeply about her and about Amy Irving, who plays the generic nice girl in King's plot; that you feel terrible when the sympathetic gym teacher (also played by Miss Buckley, incidentally) is cut in half by a falling basketball hoop; and that you hoot and holler when Piper Laurie, as the mother, gets crucified by a barrage of flying kitchen utensils. Anyone who goes to the Virginia hoping to see such effects translated into musical theatre will be disappointed. There Carrie's revenge is depicted as a series of laser-beam death rays; in the

apocalyptic prom scene, characters tumble about confusedly behind a smoke-screen scrim lighted in red to symbolize fire. As for Miss Buckley—who dies, inexplicably, on a vast staircase that ludicrously descends and is never used or, for that matter, identified—she just sort of keels over, after stabbing Carrie (Linzi Hateley) with a gesture that draws embarrassed laughter from the audience. The stage version never even establishes that Carrie is telekinetic, though in a Disneyesque sequence her shoes, dress, and hairbrush come to life and help her get ready for the prom. As for taking pleasure in the transformation of an ugly duckling, Miss Hateley is untransformable.

What "Carrie" most resembles is such movie musicals as "Saturday Night Fever," "Flashdance," "Footloose," and "Dirty Dancing," which present dancing—specifically, the ability to dance *well*—as a means of escaping from one's religious or class background. Pitchford wrote the screenplay and the lyrics for "Footloose." He also collaborated with Gore on several of the songs in "Fame," a movie that, like its television spinoff, grew out of the same impulse that produced a famous 1980 Dr Pepper commercial. (Debbie

Allen, the choreographer for "Carrie," and Gene Anthony Ray, who appears as one of the show's principal dancers, were both stars of the television show "Fame," and Ray was featured in the commercial itself; so, in a sense, "Carrie" might be said to have its roots in marketing.) But "Footloose" and "Dirty Dancing" actually have some good numbers; "Carrie" doesn't. Miss Allen's choreography isn't about joy or striving or aspiration, it's about T. & A.—a sort of sexualized aerobics: balletoporn. In view of how derivative the choreography is, it's surprising that it is not better: there is a "Grease" number, a "Dirty Dancing" number, and a drive-in number (complete with blinding headlights) that comes straight out of "Bye Bye Birdie" and degenerates into an orgy of what Meatloaf used to call "paradise by the dashboard light." It's hard to say which is more vulgar, Miss Allen's choreography or Mr. Ray's performance, but the three performers who, with Ray, form the quartet of principal high-schoolers are almost as unpleasant to watch as he is. Of the entire company, only Miss Buckley and Darlene Love, who plays the gym teacher, command respect. In a city teeming with actors who are starving for want of work, it's sad to see a Broadway stage filled with so many manifestly untalented performers.

—MIMI KRAMER



*"If I make the first move, do you promise
to make the second move?"*

BOOKS

Last Will and Testament

PRIMO LEVI's last book, "The Drowned and the Saved" (Summit; \$17.95; translated from the Italian by Raymond Rosenthal)—published in Italy before he committed suicide—is the condensed, poised summation of all his written work, which includes novels, memoirs, poems, short stories, and critical articles. All his books dealt more or less directly with the disastrous historical earthquake of which the great crimes of Nazi Germany constitute the epicenter, and on whose shifting ground we who are alive still stand. None of the books are less than substantial and some of them are masterpieces, but they could all, at a pinch, be replaced by this one, which compresses what they evoke into a prose argument of unprecedented cogency and force. If the unending tragedy of the Holocaust can ever be said to make sense, then it does so in these pages. The book has not been as well translated as one could wish—Levi's supreme mastery of prose is reduced to something merely impressive—but its status as an indispensable guidebook to the infernal cellars of the age we live in is beyond doubt from the first chapter.

That we need guidance is one of the things Levi was always insistent about. He insisted quietly, but on that point he never let up. In a tough joke on himself, he acknowledged his kinship with the Ancient Mariner—the epigraph of this book is from Coleridge's poem—but he didn't apologize for telling his ghastly tale. The mind will reject this kind of knowledge if it can. Such ignorance doesn't even have to be willed. It is a protective mechanism. Levi was in no doubt that this mechanism needs to be overridden. Not knowing about what didn't suit them was how people let the whole thing happen in the first place.

A powerful aid to not knowing was the scale of the horror, hard to imagine even if you were there. The S.S. taunted the doomed with the assurance that after it was all over, nobody left alive would be able to credit what had happened to the dead, so there would be nothing to mark their passing—not even a memory. Levi's argument, already a summary, is difficult to summarize further, but if a central tenet can

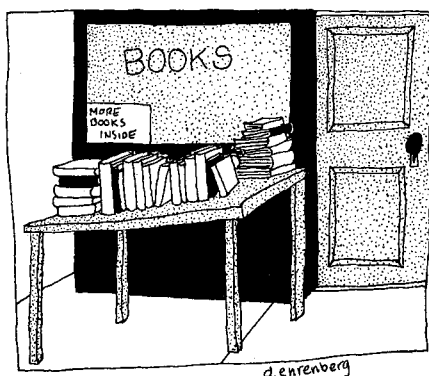
be extracted it would have to do with exactly that—memory. Beyond the evidence, which is by now so mountainous that it can be challenged only by the insane, there is the interpretation of the evidence. To interpret it correctly, even we who are sane have to grasp what things were really like. Levi is trying to make us see something that didn't happen to us as if we remembered it. There are good reasons, I think, for believing that not even Levi could fully succeed in this task. We can't live with his memories, and in the long run it turned out that not even he could. But if he has failed he has done so only to the extent of having been unable to concoct a magic potion, and in the process he has written a classic essay.

In Auschwitz, most of Levi's fellow Italian Jews died quickly. If they spoke no German and were without special skills, nothing could save them from the gas chambers and the ovens. Like most of the deportees from all the other parts of Nazi-occupied Europe, they arrived with small idea of where they were, and died before they could find out. Levi's training as a chemist made him exploitable. The few German words he had picked up in his studies were just enough to convey this fact to the exploiters. In the special camp for useful workers—it is fully described in his first and richest book, "Survival in Auschwitz"—Levi was never far from death, but he survived to write his testimony, in the same way that Solzhenitsyn survived the Gulag, and for the same reason: privilege. If Solzhenitsyn had not been a mathematician, we would probably never have heard of him as a writer. But if Levi had not been a chemist we would certainly never have heard of him as a

writer. In the Soviet labor camp, death, however plentiful, was a by-product. The Nazi extermination camp was dedicated exclusively to its manufacture. Luck wasn't enough to bring you through. You had to have an edge on all the others. The proposition sounds pitiless until Levi explains it: "We, the survivors, are not the true witnesses." The typical prisoner did not get out alive. Those at the heart of the story had no story.

Shame, according to Levi, is thus the ineluctable legacy of all who lived. Reduced to a bare ego, the victim was under remorseless pressure to ignore the fate of everyone except himself. If he had friends, he and his friends were against the others, at least to the extent of not sharing with them the extra piece of bread that could make the difference between life and death within the conspiratorial circle but if shared outside would not be even a gesture, because everyone would die. During a heat wave, Levi found a few extra mouthfuls of water in a rusty pipe. He shared the bounty only with a close friend. He might have told others about this elixir of life, but he did not. Luckily, his self-reproach, though patently bitter, helps rather than hinders his effort to re-create for us the stricken landscape in which feelings of complicity were inescapable.

One of Levi's several triumphs as a moralist—for once, the word can be used with unmixed approval—is that he has analyzed these deep and complicated feelings of inexpungible shame without lapsing into the relativism that would make everyone guilty. If everyone was guilty, then everyone was innocent, and Levi is very certain that his persecutors were not innocent. The Nazis were as guilty as the hell they built. The good citizens who decided not to know were less guilty but still guilty. There were many degrees of guilt among those who were not doing the suffering. Some of them were as innocent as you can be while still being party to a crime. But parties to a crime they all were. The victims of the crime had nothing at all in common with those who planned it or went along with it. The victims who survived, and who were ashamed because they did,

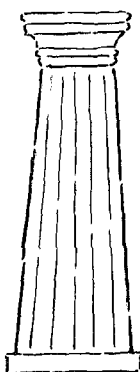


were not responsible for their shame, because they were driven to it. Even if they did reprehensible things—in the area of behavior that Levi calls the Gray Zone—they could reasonably contend that they would never have contemplated such conduct in normal circumstances, from which they had been displaced through no fault of their own.

Levi has no harsh words even for those most terribly contaminated of survivors, the *Sonderkommando* veterans. The few still alive decline to speak. Levi believes that the right to silence of these men, who chose to live at the price of cooperating with the killers, should be respected. He is able to imagine—able, momentarily, to make *us* imagine—that the chance of postponing one's own death was hard to turn down, even at the cost of having to attend closely upon the unspeakable deaths of countless others. Levi manages to sympathize even with the Kapos, not all of whom were sadists, and all of whom wanted to live. Levi has no sympathy for the persecutors, but he is ready to understand them, as long as he is not asked to exonerate them. His patience runs out only when it comes to those who parade their compassion without realizing that they are trampling on the memory of the innocent dead. As a writer, Levi always keeps his anger in check, the better to distribute its intensity, but occasionally you sense that he is on the verge of an outburst. One such moment is when he reproves the film director Liliana Cavani, who has offered the opinion "We are all victims or murderers, and we accept these roles voluntarily." Faced with this brand of self-indulgent vaporizing, Levi expresses just enough contempt to give us an inkling of what his fury would have been like if he had ever let rip. To confuse the murderers with their victims, he says, "is a moral disease or an aesthetic affectation or a sinister sign of complicity; above all, it is precious service rendered (intentionally or not) to the negators of truth."

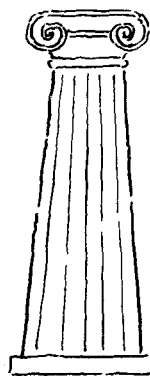
Levi might have written like that all the time if he had wished. But his sense of proportion never let him down. The offense was too great for individual anger to be appropriate. Emerging from his discussion of the Gray Zone of behavior, in which the survivors, pushed to the edge of the pit, were excusably reduced to base actions that

GREEK ORDERS



DORIC

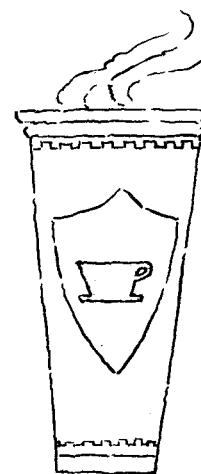
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they would not have dreamed of in real life, he goes on to discuss the inexcusably base actions of those engineers of cruelty who made sure that even the millions of victims murdered immediately on arrival would have an education in despair before they died. In a chapter called "Useless Violence," Levi reminds us that we should not set too much store by the idea that the Nazi extermination program was, within its demented limits, carried out rationally. Much of the cruelty had no rational explanation whatsoever. No matter how long it took the train to reach the camp, the boxcars were never provided with so much as a bucket. It wasn't that the S.S. were saving themselves trouble: since the boxcars had to be sent back in reasonable shape to be used again, it would actually have been *less* trouble to provide them with some sort of facility, however crude. There was no reason not to do so except to cause agony. Old people who were already dying in their homes were thrown onto the trains lest they miss out on the death the Nazis had decided was due them, the death with humiliation as a prelude.

You would expect Levi's voice to crack when he writes of such things, but instead it grows calmer. He doesn't profess to fully comprehend what went on in the minds of people who could relish doing such things to their fellow human beings. His tone of voice embodies his reticence. He is not reticent, however, about any commentator who *does* profess to fully understand, without having understood the most elementary facts of the matter. After the protracted and uncertain journey re-

corded in "The Reawakening," Levi at last returned to Italy, and there was told that his survival must surely have been the work of Providence: fate had preserved him, a friend said, so that he might testify. In this book Levi characterizes that idea as "monstrous": a big word for him—almost as big as any word he ever uses about the events themselves.

He is firm on the point, but his firmness is only a subdued echo of how he made the same point at the end of the "October 1944" chapter of "Survival in Auschwitz," where the prisoner Kuhn, after the terrifying process of selection for the gas chambers has once again passed him by, loudly and personally thanks God. In the earlier book Levi was scornful of Kuhn's selfishness in believing that the Providence that had ignored so many should be concerned to preserve him. ("If I was God, I would spit at Kuhn's prayer.") In this book, the same argument is put no less decisively, but more in sorrow than in anger, as if such folly were ineradicable, a part of being human. Though Levi was never a fatalist, at the end of his life he seems to have been readier to accept that human beings are frail and would prefer to misunderstand these things if given the opportunity. Wonderfully, however, he remained determined not to give them the opportunity. At the very time when he feared that the memory and its meaning might slip from the collective human intelligence and go back into the historic past that we only pretend concerns us, Levi's trust in human reason was at its most profound. Transparent even in its passion, level-

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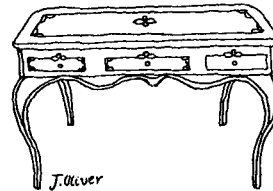
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headed at the rim of the abyss, the style of his last book is an act of faith.

From the translation, however, you can't always tell. Raymond Rosenthal has mainly done a workmanlike job where something more accomplished was called for, and sometimes he is not even workmanlike. "The Drowned and the Saved" ranks with Nadezhda Mandelstam's "Hope Against Hope" as a testament of the age, but Nadezhda Mandelstam's translator was Max Hayward, whose English was on a par with her Russian. One doesn't want to berate Mr. Rosenthal, who has toiled hard, but one might be forgiven for wishing that his editors had noticed when he needed help. If they weren't aware that a paragraph by Levi always flows smoothly as a single rhythmic unit, they should at least have guessed that a sentence by Levi is never nonsense—and when it comes down to detail the translation all too often obscures what Levi took pains to make clear, dulls the impact of his most precisely calculated effects, and puts chaos back into the order he achieved at such cost.

The translator's Italian is good enough to make sure that he usually doesn't, when construing from that language, get things backward, but he can get them sideways with daunting ease, and on several occasions he puts far too much trust in his ear. To render *promiscuità* as "promiscuity," as he does twice, is, in the context, a howler. Levi didn't mean that people forced to live in a ghetto were tormented by promiscuity. He meant that they were tormented by propinquity. The unintentional suggestion that they were worn out by indiscriminate lovemaking is, in the circumstances, a bad joke. Similarly, the Italian word *evidentemente*, when it means "obviously," can't be translated as "evidently," which always implies an element of doubt; that is, means virtually the opposite. "Also in the certainly much vaster field of the victim one observes a drifting of memory, but here, evidently, fraud is not involved." Thus a point about which Levi is morally certain is made tentative. Again, the word *comportamenti* is good plain Italian, but "behaviors" is sociologese: the translator has left room for the reader to suspect that Levi was prone to jar-



gon, when in fact he eschewed it rigorously, out of moral conviction.

Sometimes neglect attains the level of neologism. When Levi says that the daily life of the Third Reich was profoundly *compenetrato* by the Lager system, the word *compenetrato* is hard to translate; "penetrated" isn't comprehensive enough, but you certainly can't render it as "compentrated," which looks like a misprint anyway and, even if it had an "e" between the "n" and the "t," would still send you straight to the dictionary—and it would have to be a big one. Such a verbal grotesquerie, however, at least has the merit of being easy to spot. More insidious

are transpositions of meaning which sound plausible. There are sentences that have, under a troubled surface, an even more troubled depth. "But it is doubtless that this torment of body and spirit, mythical and Dantesque, was excogitated to prevent the formation of self-defense and active resistance nuclei: the Lager SS were obtuse brutes, not subtle demons." Here *nuclei di autodifesa o di resistenza attiva*, which could have been translated in the same word order and sounded like good English, has been pointlessly inverted to sound like sociologese; and *escogitato* has been taken straight when it needed, for naturalness, to be turned into some simpler word, such as "planned" or "devised." But you could make these repairs and still leave the deeper damage undisturbed. The word "doubtless" should be "doubtful." Retroactively this becomes clear. The rest of the paragraph eventually tells you that its first sentence is nonsensical. There is the satisfaction of solving a brainteaser. It is an inappropriate pleasure; Levi was not writing "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland." Having actually been through the looking glass into the realm of perverted logic, he came back with an urgent commitment to lucidity. Watching his helpers frustrate him in this aim is not pleasant.

Most of these glitches are at the level of vocabulary and grammar. Another inadequacy, though it matters less for the purpose of initial comprehension, has the eventual effect of denying us knowledge of Levi's intimacy with the literary tradition to which he contributed and by which he was sustained. As

his book of essays "Other People's Trades" explicitly reveals, Levi was cultivated in the literatures of several languages. But the literature of his own language had cultivated him. He was *compennetrato* with the poetry and prose of his national heritage. In this book he acknowledges quotations from Manzoni and Leopardi, but, like most Italian writers, he assumes that allusions to Dante need not be flagged. It was foolishly confident of the editors of this English edition to assume the same thing.

Levi often echoes Dante. All too frequently, the translator fails to alert us that this is happening. To leave the allusions unexplained is to weaken the central meaning, because they are always functional. A typical instance is in the passage about those Nazis who for ideological reasons had ended up among the prisoners: "They were disliked by everyone." The word *spiacenti*, which would not occur in everyday language, is a reference to "Inferno" III, 63, where it describes those who have been rejected by both God and God's enemies. By the translator's simply rendering what is said, without explaining what is meant, a powerful use of literary allusion has been turned into patty-cake. Still, the sense survives, and there are worse faults in a translator than to be occasionally clueless. It is worse to be careless. Levi may have literally said that he was "intimately satisfied by the symbolic, incomplete, tendentious, sacred representation in Nuremberg," but *sacra rappresentazione* means a medieval morality play and can't be used here in its literal form without making Levi sound mystical at the very moment when he is making a point of sounding hardheaded.

In Italy, the school editions of Levi's books are thoroughly annotated—in several cases, by Levi himself. It would have been better if his English-language publishers had waited for the school editions to come out and then had them translated, notes and all. Unfortunately, the world of publishing has its own momentum. One can't complain about there having been so much eagerness to get Levi's books translated, but a side effect of the haste has been that his achievement, so coherent in his own language, looks

fragmented in ours. He has had several translators, of varying competence. His carefully chosen titles have sometimes been mangled in translation—especially by his publishers in the United States, who have on the whole been less sensitive than his publishers in Britain to his delicate touch. "Se Questo È un Uomo," called "If This Is a Man" in Britain, in the current United States edition is called "Survival in Auschwitz"—a journalistic come-on that no doubt has its merits as an attention-getter but can't be said to prepare the way for a narrative that dedicates itself to avoiding stock responses. In the U.K., the title of "La Tregua" is translated as "The Truce," which is accurate, but in the United States it appears as "The Reawakening," which is inaccurate, because the whole point of the book is that Levi's long voyage home was merely a pause between two periods of struggle—one to survive physically and the other to cope mentally. As for his important novel "La Chiave a Stella," it can only be regretted that his publishers across the Atlantic tried so hard to help him. A *chiave a stella* is indeed a kind of wrench, but it is not a monkey wrench. "The Monkey Wrench," however, would not have been as awkward a title as the one that the book was given, "The Monkey's Wrench." To translate "La Chiave a Stella" literally as "The Star-Shaped Key" might have been too poetic for Levi—who is always too truly poetic to be enigmatic—but a momentary puzzle would have been better than a lasting blur. Levi's exactitude, after all, is not incidental to him. It's him.



Books have their fortunes. If the transmission of Levi's body of work into our language might have gone better, it could also have gone worse. Clearly, all concerned tried their best. It is impossible to imagine that anyone involved—whether translator, editor, designer, or executive—thought lightly of the task. Presumably, Levi's approval was sought and obtained for those clumsy titles: he could read English, and in the last years of his life he attended evening classes, so that he might learn to speak it more fluently. He was vitally interested in guarding the safe passage of his books to a wider world. Yet the results of



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the transference—in our language, at any rate—are less than wholly satisfactory. Thus we are given yet further evidence that the declension that Levi said he most feared—the way the truth "slides fatally toward simplification and stereotype, a trend against which I would like here to erect a dike"—is very hard to stem.

How worried should we be about this tendency? Obviously, we should be very worried. But in what way should we be worried? The answer to that, I think, is not so readily forthcoming. Most of us choose our friends according to whether or not they understand these matters—or, at any rate, we decline to keep any friends who don't. We are already worried, and might even

protest, if pushed to it, that we are worried enough—that if we were any more worried we would get nothing done, and civilization would collapse anyway. What we are really worried about is all those people who *aren't* worried, especially the young. We assume, along with Santayana, that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. Anything written or filmed about the Holocaust—any essay, play, novel, film documentary, or television drama, from this brilliant book by Levi all the way down to the poor, stumbling, and execrated miniseries "Holocaust" itself—is informed by that assumption. Critical reaction to any such treatment of the Holocaust is governed by that same assumption. When it is argued that a rendition of the experience must be faithful to the experience, and that the effectiveness of the rendition will be proportionate to the fidelity, the argument is based on that same assumption. An assumption, however, is all it is. Hard-bitten on the face of it, on closer examination it looks like wishful thinking.

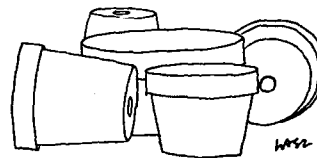
It is undoubtedly true that some people who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. But some people who can't remember the past aren't. More disturbingly, many of those who can remember the past are condemned to repeat it anyway. Plenty of people who remembered the past were sent to die in the extermination camps. Their knowledge availed them nothing, because events were out of their control. One of the unfortunate side effects of

studying German culture up to 1933, and the even richer Austrian culture up to 1938, is the depression induced by the gradual discovery of just how cultivated the two main German-speaking countries were. It didn't help a bit. The idea that the widespread study of history among its intellectual elite will make a nation-state behave better is a pious wish. Whether in the household or in the school playground, ethics are transmitted at a far more basic level than that of learning, which must be pursued for its own sake: learning is not utilitarian, even when

—especially when—we most fervently want it to be.

We should face the possibility that written learning, even in the unusually affecting

form of an essay like "The Drowned and the Saved," can be transmitted intact only between members of an intelligentsia already in possession of the salient facts. Clearly, the quality of written speculative discussion will influence the quality of artistic treatments of the subject, in whatever form they may be expressed. Here again, however, we should face the possibility that it might not necessarily be the artistic work of highest quality which influences the public. From Alain Resnais's breathtaking short film "Nuit et Brouillard," of 1956, to the recent documentary "Shoah," most of the screen treatments of the fate of the European Jews have been considered by those who know something about the subject to have spread at least a modicum of enlightenment, if only in the form of a useful myth. The exception was the aforementioned American miniseries "Holocaust," which, although it won a few prizes, also received a worldwide pasting—especially from those critics who saw it in the United States, where it was punctuated by commercials. Even in Britain, where I saw it, any critic who found merit in it was likely to be told that he was insensitive to the subject. But whether those of us who had a good word to say for "Holocaust" were being as crass as it was crude is beside the point here. The point is that it was "Holocaust," out of all these productions, that had the direct, verifiable historic effect. Just before the miniseries was screened in West Germany, a statute of limitations on Nazi



crimes was about to come into effect. After the miniseries was screened, the statute was rescinded. Public opinion had been decisive. It could be said that this was a very late stage for the German public to get wise. It could even be said that if it took a melodrama like "Holocaust" to wake it up, then it was best left sleeping. But it couldn't be denied that a clumsy story had broken through barriers of unawareness that more sophisticated assaults had not penetrated.

Not just of Germany but of all other countries it was, of course, true that the wider public hadn't seen the more sophisticated efforts, so there was no comparison. But this merely proved that if the wider public is to be reached the message has to be popularized. Whether popularized necessarily means vulgarized is the obvious question, to which the answer, however reluctantly given, surely has to be yes. If the *mobile vulgus* is what you want to reach, then there is no virtue in constructing something too oblique for its members to be attracted by, or, if they are attracted, to understand. The more you insist that the event's implications are endless, and the more you pronounce yourself worried that the event's implications somehow haven't been taken in by the general run of humanity, the more you must be committed to some process of reduction. The trick is to popularize without traducing, to simplify without distorting—to vulgarize without violating. At its best, this process will be a distillation, but it is hard to see how dilution can be avoided for long. And, indeed, there are good reasons for supposing that any effort, even the best, to convey the importance of this subject is bound to render it less than it was. Arthur Miller's television film "Playing for Time" was rightly praised. The performances of Jane Alexander and Vanessa Redgrave were on a par with Meryl Streep's in "Holocaust," with the difference that Miss Alexander and Miss Redgrave were working with a screenplay that was content to evoke by suggestion what it could not show without cosmeticizing. Nothing was shirked except one thing. Though the story about the two brave lovers who escaped was a true one, it was not true that after recapture they died facing each other with one last look of love. The two recaptured runaways are given a private shared moment on the

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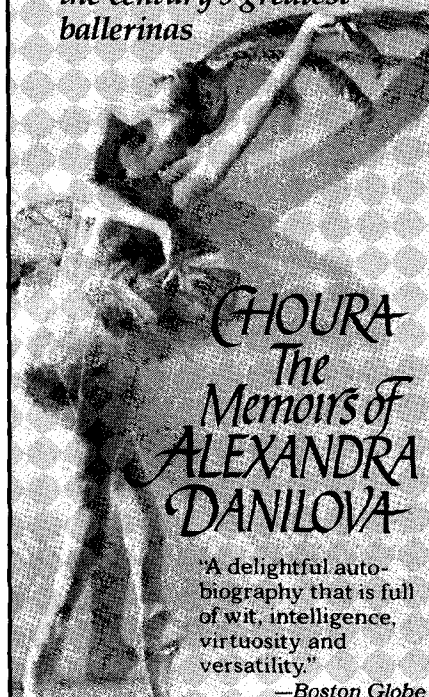
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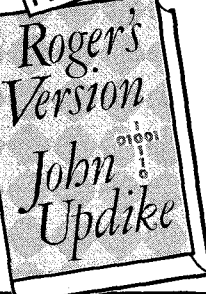
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point of death, as if, though their fate was sealed, they could to some extent choose the manner of it. It is a brilliantly dramatic scene. But it is dramatic license. In reality, there was no choice. In "The Drowned and the Saved" Levi tells what really happened to the two who fled. The Nazis did not allow them any last beautiful moment. Only a work of art can arrange that—and, of course, we want it to, we demand it. It is hard to see how, against this demand to give the meaningless meaning, the full facts, in all their dreadful emptiness, can prevail. We will always look for consolation, and will always need to be talked out of it.

Levi tried to talk us out of it. There is no reason to believe he gave up on the task, because there is no reason to believe he thought that it could ever be fully accomplished in the first place. If we think he died of disappointment, we mistake him, and underestimate the frightfulness he was telling us about. Writing about Tamburlaine, Burckhardt said there were some episodes of history so evil that they weren't even of any use in defining the good: they were simply a dead loss. For all his tough-mindedness about erstwhile horrors, Burckhardt had no inkling that there were more to come. When they came, they were worse. For Burckhardt, the slaughterhouse happened in history: he was able to look back on it with a steady gaze. For Levi, it was life itself. The shock was never over, the suffering was never alleviated. The reason for his suicide, so bewildering at the time, is now, in retrospect, not so hard to guess. In the first chapter of this book he quotes his friend Jean Améry, who was tortured by the Gestapo and committed suicide more than thirty years later: "Anyone who has been tortured remains tortured." Levi's admirable sanity might have been produced in part by his dreadful memories, but it was maintained in spite of them. A fit of depression induced by some minor surgery was enough to open the way out which only a continuous act of will had enabled him to keep closed. His style to the end—and, on the evidence of this last book, even more at the end than at the beginning—had the mighty imperturbability of Tacitus, who wrote the truth as though it were worth telling even if there was nobody to listen and no prospect of liberty's being restored. But if Schopenhauer was right to call style the physiognomy

of the soul, nevertheless the soul's face has a body, and in Levi's case the body had been injured. Once again, the urge for consolation can lead us astray. We would like to think that in time any pain can be absorbed, rationalized, given a place. But gratuitous violence is not like childbirth; it serves no purpose, and refuses to be forgotten.

Levi's admirers can be excused if they find it more comforting to be appalled by his demise than to admit how they had been lulled by the example of his sweet reason into believing that what he had been through helped to make him a great writer, and that the catastrophe therefore had that much to be said for it, if no more. But part of his greatness as a writer was to warn us against drawing up a phony balance sheet. The idea that it takes extreme experience to produce great literature should never be left unexamined. The great literature that arises from extreme experience covers a very narrow band, and does so at the cost of bleaching out almost the whole of life—the everyday world that enjoys, in Nadezhda Mandelstam's great phrase, "the privilege of ordinary heartbreaks." Catastrophes like the Holocaust—and if it is argued that there have been no catastrophes quite like the Holocaust it can't usefully be argued that there won't be—have no redeeming features. Any good that comes out of them belongs not to them but to the world they try to wreck. Our only legitimate consolation is that, although they loom large in the long perspectives of history, history would have no long perspectives if human beings were not, in the aggregate, more creative than destructive. But the mass slaughter of the innocent is not a civics lesson. It involves us all, except that some of us were lucky enough not to be there. The best reason for trying to lead a decent life is that we are living on borrowed time, and the best reason to admire Primo Levi's magnificent last book is that he makes this so clear.

—CLIVE JAMES

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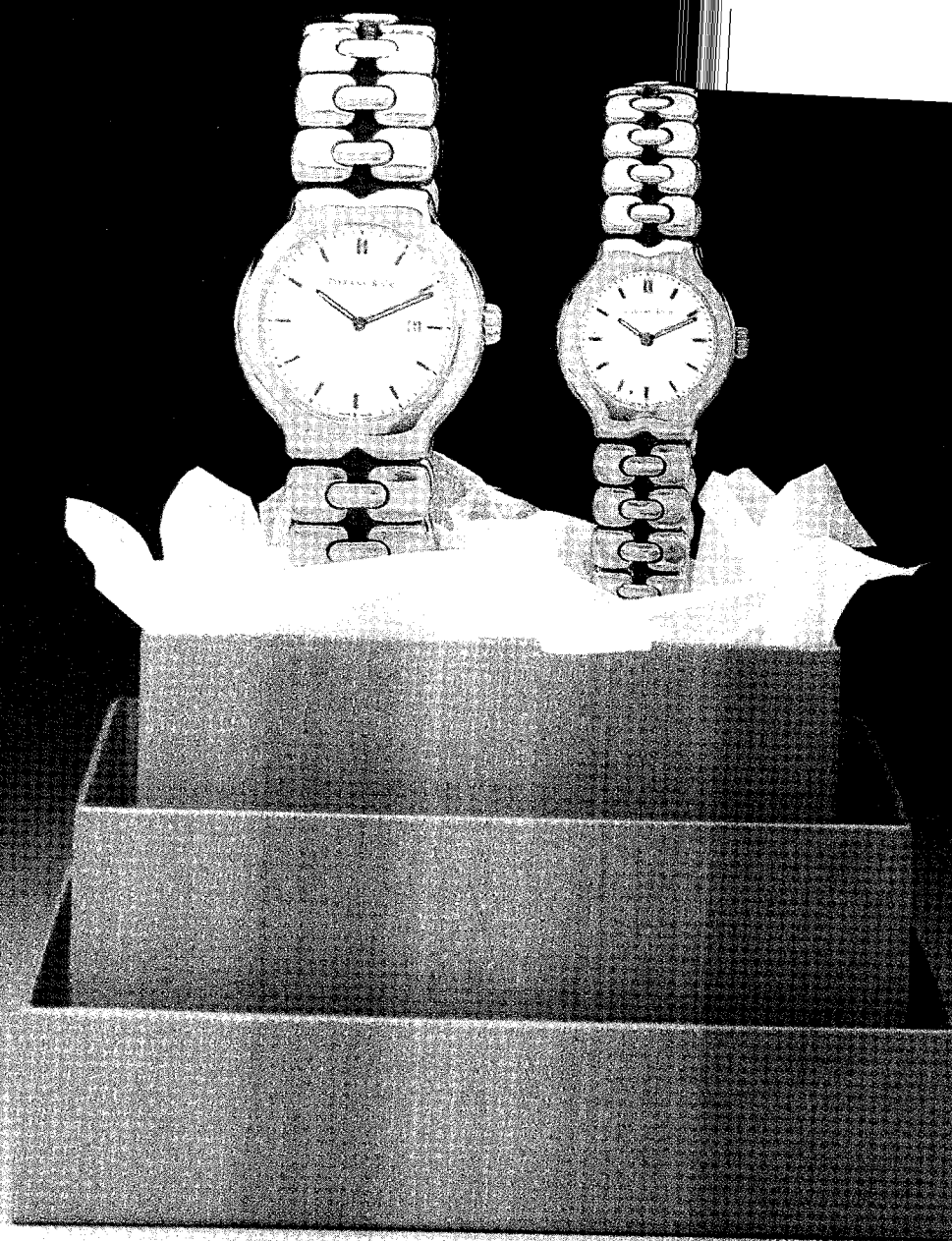
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